

**THE DEMAND FOR AND SUPPLY OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN  
IRELAND: TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM  
DESTINATIONS**

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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
2013**

### INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

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The competitiveness of the European tourism industry is closely linked to its sustainability, as the quality of tourist destinations is strongly influenced by their natural and cultural environment and their integration into the local community (European Commission, 2013).

#### 1.1 Introduction

Tourism destinations need to adapt to changes in management. They cannot afford to ignore the issue of changes in the pattern of demand and the type of tourism they offer (Tourism Sustainability Group, 2007). The sustainable management of tourism destinations is being consolidated at an international level. The indicator systems and criteria for the sustainable management of tourism destinations demonstrate a precedent for the management of tourism destinations globally. This is through the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for destinations (2012) and the European Commissions, European Tourism Indicator System (2013) for sustainable management at destination level.

This research contributes new knowledge on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. It also seeks to improve our understanding on the sustainable management of tourism destinations. This chapter will set the scene for the remainder of the thesis. A consideration of the contextual issues demonstrating the research intent commences this chapter. With this foundation in place, a presentation of the aims and objectives will follow, in addition to a discussion on the importance of this research and its contribution to knowledge. The context of Irish tourism and its structure for the sustainable management of tourism will consequently be examined. The chapter will be concluded with an overview of the thesis structure.

## **1.2 Research intent**

Tourism is Ireland's largest indigenous industry (Tourism Ireland, 2013). It is an important driver of economic activity and shapes Ireland's image and attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest. While sustainable tourism has been discussed for decades, the practical application of this has received little academic attention in Ireland. The intent of this research is to contribute new knowledge on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. A large representative sample of holidaymakers and national tourism businesses will be needed to accomplish this. This is for the simple reason that holidaymakers are a major driving force behind sustainable tourism (Tjolle, 2008). The tourism businesses are pivotal to fulfil the demands of the market, providing a supply of sustainable tourism. The research will also generate baseline findings on the demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. Furthermore, there is a gap in knowledge specific to the sustainable management of tourism destinations in Ireland. The research will bridge this gap by examining the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare. Furthermore, the data and findings will be utilised to develop a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

This study had a significant resonance with the researcher. This was due to living in a natural unspoilt area that was developed through the selfless work of locals and the support of cross border development projects. Interest matured to a global perspective achieved by working with Sustainable Travel International (STI) and assisting two of Ireland's leading tourism attractions become certified by STI. The research is structured around the forthcoming aims and objectives. Many of which were requested by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority (NTDA) who part funded this research.

## **1.3 Research aims and objectives**

This thesis is concerned with the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with an emphasis on understanding the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The aims of the research:

1. Assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland.
2. Examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination (County Clare).

In order to achieve these aims the following objectives were developed:

- a) Assess the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland.

To establish the first baseline findings on the demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland, the research will need to construct a theoretical framework. The major milestones identified in the literature will be embedded to the framework such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism. The demand for sustainable tourism certification will need to be examined as it is a key tool in the sustainable management of tourism and to enhance the credibility of the sector (Honey, 2002; Bauckham, 2005; Medina, 2005; Bien, 2007; Eichhorn et al., 2008; Conaghan and Hanrahan, 2010; Mil-Homens, 2011). Therefore, the research will identify if these aspects are considered important for the management of tourism in Ireland according to domestic and international holidaymakers and the national tourism businesses.

- b) Assess the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare.

For the assessment of the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland, there will be a focus on County Clare. The framework will integrate sustainable management systems, certification, training in sustainable tourism and include indicators that conform to global best practice (Swarbrooke, 2000; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; UNWTO, 2007; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; GSTC, 2008, 2012). A qualitative research tool will be constructed to allow for the assessment of stakeholders from County Clare supply of sustainable tourism. This will be reinforced with findings from the sample of national tourism business supply of sustainable tourism.

- c) Determine the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland.

There is a gap in knowledge regarding the demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. In order to establish baseline findings, a theoretical framework will be designed to assess the demand and thus bridge this gap in knowledge. The research will investigate if holidaymakers would seek to holiday in a sustainable tourism destination. Furthermore, it will examine if the tourism businesses demand to be part of a sustainable tourism destination.

- d) Examine the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare.

In order to probe tourism stakeholders and examine the sustainable management of tourism in a destination, a theoretical framework will need to be designed incorporating the major themes emerging from the literature. This will build upon related theory, models and principles from major authors in the area of sustainable tourism including national and international guidelines (Foh, 1999; Cooper, 2002; Howie, 2003; Page, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Australian Government, 2004; Jamieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2007; Holden, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Moscardo, 2011; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; GSTC, 2012; European Commission, 2013). This will inform the construction of strategic open ended questions and a content analysis tool to analyse County Clare's tourism management organisations operations, strategies and plans.

- e) The development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

Due to the applied and comparative nature of the research it would seem appropriate to take advantage of the data and utilise the research to design a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The model will integrate empirical data from the research conducted in Ireland and will need to have a strong theoretical basis conforming to international best practice (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; European Commission, 2013). For the functionality of the model, it will need to be constructed into distinguishable stages. The realistic implementation will need to be taken into consideration so that it may be integrated within the legal binding process under Irish planning guidelines (2007), the County Development Plan. The model will need to map upon elements with substantial commonality in tourism planning models. The model will be developed so that it may assist in the management of tourism destinations in Ireland but can be adapted for worldwide use.

#### **1.4 Importance of research and contribution to knowledge**

The importance of this research is paramount at a time when the sustainable management of tourism destinations is being consolidated at an international level. A sustainable approach to tourism will not only make European destinations even more attractive, it will lead to the development of innovative, quality tourism products and services (European Commission, 2013). There is a growing accumulation of knowledge

on the sustainable management of tourism (Foh, 1999; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Jamieson, 2006; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Morrissey, Griffin and Flanagan, 2010; GSTC, 2008, 2012; European Commission, 2013). However, there is a gap in knowledge regarding the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. This research sets forth to bridge this gap by providing nationwide baseline findings.

The concept of the sustainable management of tourism destinations is relatively new (GSTC, 2012; European Commission, 2013). Therefore, the research establishes if there is a demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. Furthermore, it examines the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare. There is no model to clarify how the resources and provision of tools for the sustainable management of tourism may be integrated in the management of tourism destinations. To address these issues, the research will take advantage of the new knowledge on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism by developing a theoretical model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

This thesis significant contribution marks a baseline for research into the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland. The model will be developed to conform to the Global Sustainable Tourism Councils (GSTC) criteria for destinations, including the most recently launched European Commissions (EC), European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013). As a result, it has the potential to assist in the management of tourism destinations in Ireland and may be adapted for worldwide use. The research model and findings should be beneficial to the tourism industry and academics not only in Ireland but globally.

## **1.5 Context of Irish tourism**

Tourism is Ireland's largest indigenous industry (Tourism Ireland, 2013). The last decade has seen many world events and crises impact on the Irish tourism industry. Despite these challenges, Ireland has managed to maintain a relatively strong performance during this period. Tourism in Ireland contributes to almost 4% of GNP (Tourism Ireland, 2013). Providing employment for over 200,000 people, therefore directly and indirectly supporting employment across the country for a range of skill

levels (Tourism Ireland, 2013). Last year, revenue from overseas tourists was at €4 billion and €1.73 billion from the domestic market (IHF, 2013). Much of this revenue comes from the GB market who in 2011 alone, provided almost 50% of visitors to the island of Ireland. That is 800,000 British visitors, half the amount it was in 2008 (Fáilte Ireland, 2013). A major barrier in attracting more British tourists is due to the perceived image that Ireland is expensive.

Ireland's tourism industry has improved its competitiveness and value-for-money ratings through actions supported by Government under the Jobs Initiative. This included reducing VAT on certain tourism services to 9%, introducing the Visa Waiver Programme and halving employers' PRSI for those on modest wages (DTTS, 2013). According to Fáilte Ireland (2013), confidence in the tourism industry was returning and massive efforts have been put in place for the recovery of the GB market. Sustainable management of tourism reduces costs for example through the resource efficiency from implementing green technologies and sustainable management systems. This leads to water, waste and energy savings. Therefore individual tourism businesses can save money through the sustainable management of tourism, business profits may rise while making products better value for money.

The sustainable management of tourism in Ireland is paramount considering it is chosen as a holiday destination mainly due to its scenery, unspoilt environment and hospitable people (Fáilte Ireland, 2010b). Ireland enjoys a rich cultural heritage that is central to who we are (Fáilte Ireland, 2006). A location's environment is the key consideration for EU citizens when deciding on a holiday destination. Cultural heritage is the second influence (EC, 2011). Half of EU citizens would return to a tourism destination for its natural features (EC, 2012). Irelands desired features along with the industries economic significance stress the need for the Irish tourism industry to co-ordinate the sustainable management of tourism. The tourism sector interacts closely with other management areas such as transport, infrastructure, planning and enterprise. As there are several management areas, the challenge lies in moving the sustainable management of tourism into practical implementation (Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005; Graci, 2007; EPA, 2008; Hanrahan, 2008; Dodds and Butler, 2009; Graci and Dodds, 2010) at the destination scale. Therefore, it is important for this research to identify the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in an Irish context.

### 1.6 Irish tourism structure in context of sustainable management of tourism

The facilitation and implementation for the sustainable management of tourism relies on an informed management approach from international, European, national, regional and local levels. The structure of the Irish tourism sector is very much orientated towards product marketing and development. This is best illustrated by the organisation and management structures of those directly and indirectly involved in managing tourism in Ireland. Table 1.1 contains some of the stakeholders involved in managing tourism in Ireland ranging from international organisations to the local stakeholders of County Clare.

**Table 1.1** Various stakeholders involved in managing tourism in Ireland

<b>International</b>	World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) UNESCO The Global Sustainable Tourism Council European Commission European Travel Commission Council of Europe Tourism Ireland
<b>National</b>	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS) The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Department of Environment, Community and Local Government Fáilte Ireland (NTDA) Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) LEADER
<b>Regional</b>	Shannon Development, Dublin Tourism, South East, South West, North West, Midlands, East Shannon Heritage, Shannon Trails Initiative Mid-West Regional Authority (MWRA)
<b>Local</b>	Clare County Council County Development Board Clare Local Development Company Clare Tourism Forum, Clare Tourist Council Burren Beo, Burren Connect Tourism Businesses, Holidaymakers, Media, Experts, Host Community, Voluntary Sector, Pressure Groups

International guidelines, European Union policies, strategies and directives, some of which in turn have to be made into Irish law have the potential to impact the management of tourism in Ireland from a sustainable perspective. According to the EU communication on tourism (2013), the competitiveness of the European tourism industry is closely linked to its sustainability. The European Commission (2013) indicated that the tourism industry needs to take a responsible role in a resource-constrained world.



The European Commission approved in 2007 an "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism". This outlines the future steps for promoting the sustainability of European tourism. This has been built upon to date with numerous EU relevant guidelines and tools for various aspects of management for businesses and destinations:

1. The EU Eco-label (1992).
2. EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) (1995).
3. Using natural and cultural heritage for the development of sustainable tourism in non-traditional tourism destinations (2002).
4. Using natural and cultural heritage for the development of sustainable tourism in traditional tourism destinations (2002).
5. EU flower (Eco-label) for tourist accommodation (2002).
6. European Destinations of Excellence EDEN (2006).
7. Actions for More Sustainable European Tourism (2007).
8. *NECSTouR* Network of European Region for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (2007).
9. The European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism (2012).
10. European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Management at Destination Level (EC, 2013).

These guides are generally prepared and tested on a number of different member states and can prove a very useful tool for tourism managers and planners alike. In 2010, the European Commission proposed a new political framework for tourism in Europe. This indicated it is essential that all operators in the sector combine their efforts and work within a consolidated political framework that takes account of the new EU priorities set out in the 'Europe 2020' strategy: Europe must remain the world's number one destination, able to capitalise on its territorial wealth and diversity. The action framework seeks to:

1. Stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector
  2. Promote development of sustainable, responsible, high-quality tourism
  3. Consolidate Europe's images as a collection of sustainable, high-quality destinations
  4. Maximise the potential of EU financial policies for developing tourism
- (EC, 2010).

The actions are to complement the policies of the member states. If these actions were integrated into Irish tourism, it would potentially take effect and contribute to the sustainable management of tourism destinations. If this is to be achieved, it would be through the work of Ireland's government departments who are responsible for implementing government policy and advising ministers.

The actions of several government departments in Ireland can exert an impact on tourism and its sustainability. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht oversees the conservation, preservation, protection and presentation of Ireland's heritage and cultural assets. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government who oversee the operation of the local government system implement policy in relation to local government structures, functions, human resources and financing. These departments provide key legislation however they are not tourism management focused. The organisations within their departments remit can have a significant influence to the sustainable management of aspects such as the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS), the National Monuments and Built Heritage, Environment, Local Government, Planning and Housing. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS) in particular have the potential to influence.

Within the Irish government there is no specific department solely for tourism as is present in other countries such as New Zealand or Canada. In Ireland the government department responsible for tourism is also responsible for transport and sport. The DTTS mission is:

To ensure that the transport, tourism and sport sectors make the greatest possible contribution to economic recovery, fiscal consolidation, job creation and social development (DTTS, 2013).

Despite this mission, the DTTS emphasis on sustainable tourism is limited likewise to the Ministers priorities until 2016. It is noted here that the mission does not reflect the Europeans action framework for tourism, parts (2) and (3) above. This is also evident with the result of the strategies developed by the ministerial appointed Tourism Renewal Group in 2008. They were to report with recommendations and list key actions to assist in ensuring that tourism continues to be a major industry for Ireland and strategies necessary to maintain the long-term sustainable growth of Irish tourism. The publication "New Horizons for Irish Tourism – A Strategy for Renewing Irish Tourism" (2009-2013), paid little attention to sustainable tourism or the sustainable management of tourism destinations. It is the state sponsored tourism agencies, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and the Regional Tourism Authorities (RTA) operating under the aegis of the DTTS who undertake the administration of policies, programmes and strategies.

Tourism Ireland is responsible for marketing Ireland and works with the two separate tourist boards, Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). The vision within their corporate plan 2011-2013 is to:

Differentiate the island of Ireland on the world stage and promote all that it has to offer making it a “must visit” destination leading to the development of a dynamic and sustainable tourism sector.

In relation to the actual sustainable management of the tourism destination, Tourism Ireland play a minimal role but can act as an advocate. It is worth highlighting that if the tourism product in Ireland degraded due to a lack of sustainable management, it is Tourism Ireland who will struggle to offer tourism products and complete the task of marketing the country on behalf of both Fáilte Ireland and the NITB.

Fáilte Ireland which acts as the National Tourism Development Authority (NTDA) are responsible for supporting Ireland’s tourism industry and sustaining Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourism destination. Fáilte Irelands main role is not the sustainable management of tourism, but rather it operates in strategic partnership with tourism interests to support the industry in its efforts to be more competitive and more profitable. Fáilte Ireland founded an Environmental Unit in 2006 which initiated from one position and expanded to four. Since then, the unit has merged into the Destination Development Division consisting of twenty employees. Fáilte Irelands role in destination development and research principally informs this study. The following publications are an example of the information offered by Fáilte Ireland to the tourism industry:

- Cultural Tourism: making it work for you: a new strategy for cultural tourism in Ireland (2006).
- Feasibility study to identify scenic landscapes in Ireland (2007).
- Review of good environmental policy and practice (2008).
- Facing the challenges of climate change, Fáilte Irelands carbon strategy (2008).
- Sharing our stories: using interpretation to improve the visitors experience at heritage sites (2010).
- Interpretation planning guidelines (2012).
- Green marketing toolkit (2012).
- Environmental guidelines for riding establishments (2012).
- Interpretation and animation scheme (2012).
- A tourism toolkit for Ireland’s cultural experiences: how to develop and communicate cultural experiences for visitors (2012).
- GB path to growth (2013).

It is important to stress that Fáilte Ireland are not in fact responsible for the entire management of tourism destinations. Tourism resources and infrastructure are often the responsibility of the local authorities which the Regional Tourism Authorities (RTAs) have to work with. At present there is major restructuring going on within the six RTAs and Shannon Development.

The RTAs administer tourism at a regional and local level. In the case of the research focus area of County Clare, Shannon Development acts as the RTA. From the sustainable management of tourism point of view, the role of the RTA is quite evident. They have a responsibility to work with the community and the Local Authorities in developing the tourism component of County Development Plans (CDP). Local Authorities oversee the operation of the local government system that is required to integrate the sustainable management of tourism.

Local Authorities deliver most of the frontline services promoted by the DTTS. The 29 County Councils have jurisdiction throughout their administrative areas which may also be a borough or town council area. Ireland has 5 City Councils, 5 Borough Councils and multiple town councils as well as the county council. Each county has a county manager and an appointed position of a tourism officer. The Local Authorities are multi-purpose bodies who are responsible for an extensive range of services. These are typically broken down into the responsibility to develop infrastructure which host communities and tourists alike utilise, such as beaches, car parks, signage, sewage, housing and environmental protection, agriculture, education, health and welfare. Furthermore, they are responsible for planning permits for the associate accommodation such as hotels and self-catering, bed and breakfast. In addition to the local authorities, there is a proliferation of tourism organisations involved in the management of tourism at County and local level. For example County Clare has the County Development Board, Clare Tourism Forum, Burren Beo and Burren Connect.

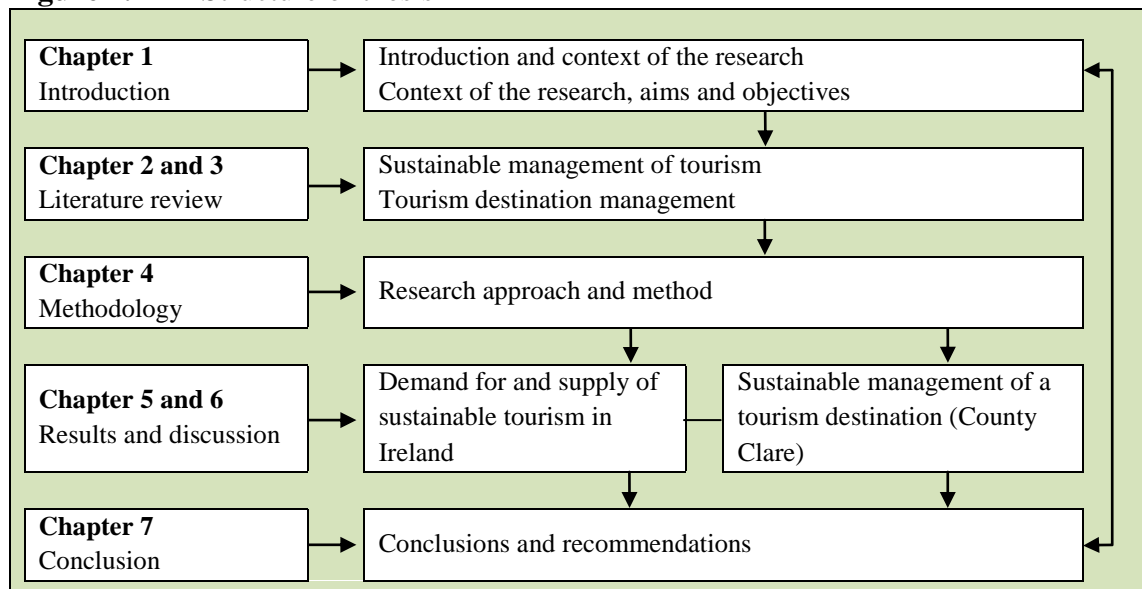
There are several organisations at County and local level that have a particular focus on the sustainable management of tourism. For example in County Clare, Burren Beo is Ireland's first landscape charity that promotes and supports sustainable management. Burren Connect focuses on environmental protection and sustainable visitor management in the Burren region of County Clare. Burren Connect works with local

stakeholders and community groups. They are supported by the local authority, RTA, NPWS and many others. On the other hand, there is LEADER, a rural development programme primarily focused on funding. Local stakeholder involvement in tourism is considered vital to have an influence to deliver the maximum benefits for the destination (Murphy, 1988; Jones, 2005; Hanrahan, 2009; Myers, Budruk and Andereck, 2011). Furthermore, involvement from tourism businesses, the holidaymakers and the host community is essential for the success of sustainable tourism. Their participation in all steps of management will contribute to public consciousness and facilitate the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland. Identifying the plethora of stakeholders involved in the management of the industry indicates that the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland will be a complex task.

## 1.7 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is illustrated in Figure 1.1. As can be observed, the extensive literature review defines the two principal categories which give structure to the remainder of the document. The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The structure is followed with a brief summary of the chapters presented.

**Figure 1.1** Structure of thesis



This introductory chapter is followed by chapter two which reviews existing literature on the sustainable management of tourism. Various instruments, tools and indicators that may be used to manage the impacts of tourism are discussed. From this, concepts are utilised to develop and construct a theoretical framework to assess the demand for

and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. The discussion provides a backdrop for chapter three.

Chapter three essentially deals with the theoretical background of tourism destination management. This chapter is to highlight the relevant issues concerning tourism destination management and the sustainable management of tourism destinations that existing research has not addressed to date in Ireland. The discussion of the various theoretical concepts provides a comprehensive contextual guideline. This allows the research to focus on the development of a theoretical framework to assess the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

In chapter four, the philosophical stance and methodology of the research thesis is discussed. The research procedure is outlined in relation to the aims and objectives encompassing both qualitative and quantitative paradigms using a multi-methodological approach. The phases of data collection through the research tools developed is outlined, explained and discussed. The chapter concludes with an overview of the research strengths and limitations.

Chapter five discusses the empirical results pertaining to the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. The findings are discussed according to the theoretical framework developed in chapter two and is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the sample of national tourism businesses and holidaymaker demand for sustainable tourism. The second section concentrates on the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare. The analysis was embedded in current theory through the use of the theoretical framework.

Chapter six presents the findings on the sustainable management of a tourism destination with a focus on County Clare. The chapter initiates by outlining the demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. The analysis on the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare is discussed in context of relevant theory and findings from qualitative in-depth interviews with tourism stakeholders. Furthermore, there are findings from the content analysis conducted of County Clare's strategies and plans. The use of multi-methods results in a wide range of findings on the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

The concluding chapter articulates the major issues that have emerged from the research. The research aims and objectives are revisited to draw final conclusions and recommendations from the findings. The model developed for transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations, which conforms to the UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013 formulations is presented and discussed. The chapter then proposes support mechanisms for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. Finally, the chapter concludes with a challenge for future researchers to expand upon this research and add valuable baseline data from a longitudinal perspective. This would further expand knowledge to help broaden our understanding of the concept and nature of the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

# SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM

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*Tourism, the world's biggest industry, is booming. By 2020, the number of international arrivals by air and by sea could reach 1.6 billion annually. This growth brings the prospect of income and economic development to countless tourist destinations in rich and poor countries alike. The challenge is to manage this growth sustainably. Governments have a key role to play, but so too do individuals and families when planning and going on holiday (Achim Steiner, UNEP, 2008).*

## 2.1 Introduction

The sustainable management of tourism requires consideration due to the contribution it makes to environmental, cultural heritage, social and economic issues. In order to understand the sustainable management of tourism, it is first necessary to understand sustainability and tourism. This chapter clarifies the various terms and reviews theory, planning, tools and tourism indicators which may be used for the sustainable management of tourism. It also reviews international best practice standards for the sustainable management of tourism that are generally accepted by the industry. The major themes identified within the literature are utilised to construct a theoretical framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. An outline of the framework is provided at the end of this chapter.

## 2.2 Sustainability and tourism

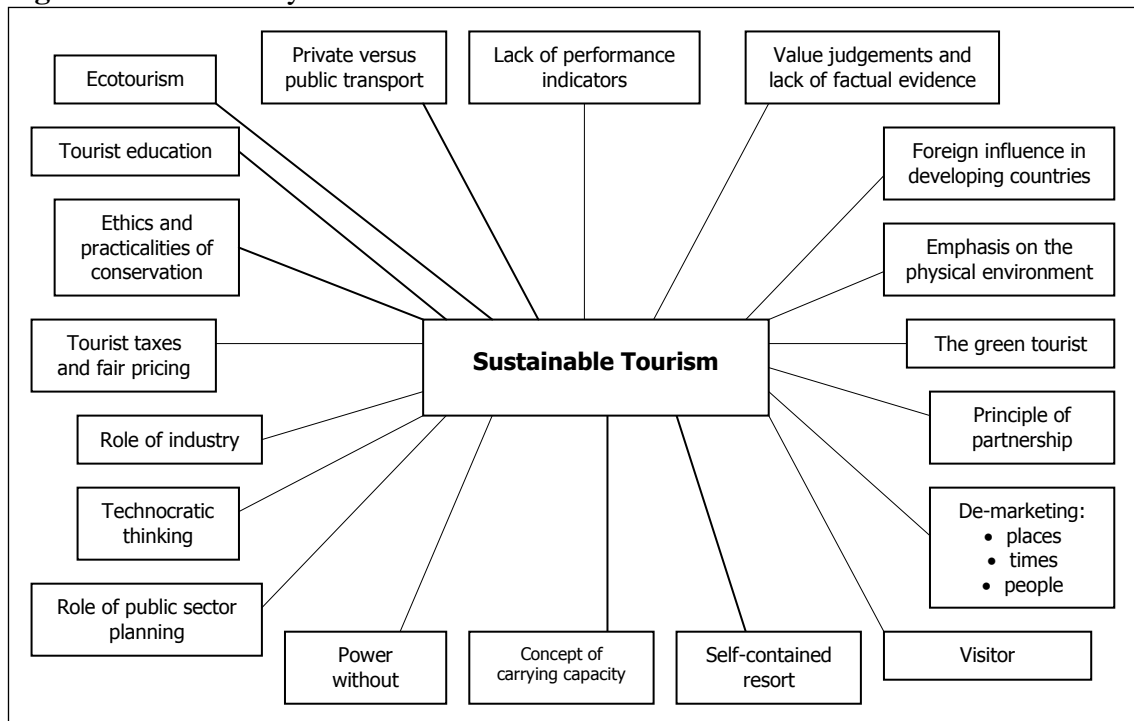
A significant amount of research has been devoted to sustainable tourism development and management, which has in turn advanced the concept (Schianetz, Kavanagh, and Lockington, 2007). Tourism with its growth potential has become a high priority for nations and communities globally. With the potential associated negative tourism impacts, new ways are being looked at to manage these. The need for better planning is evident. Over 50 years ago Walter Firey (1960) argued that sustainable development in any industry relies on the integrated planning and management of three interdependent systems - the environment, the economy and society (Lawson, Williams, Young and



Cossens, 1998). In conducting this research, it was therefore necessary to review theory that took into consideration these three interdependent systems.

The term “sustainability” has become a central topic in the tourism industry (Byrd and Cardenas, 2007). It was indicated that sustainability has become the subject for a contemporary assessment of progress and responsibility, freedom and culture (Bachmann, 2010). While the term is becoming increasingly popular, Jenkins and Schroder (2013) indicated that doubts have been raised about whether the promised harmonisation of ecological, social and economic goals associated with sustainability is actually achievable. There is also debate about the term sustainable tourism which is said to be patchy and disjointed, often flawed with false assumptions and arguments (Liu, 2003). There are issues that are often overlooked. It is important to recognise the various issues for debate regarding sustainable tourism (Figure 2.1) (Swarbrooke, 1999). One of the issues this study addresses is the lack of factual evidence. This would be an issue for the Irish tourism industry which has undertaken very limited factual research and has not identified a demand for or supply of sustainable tourism.

**Figure 2.1** The key issues in the sustainable tourism debate



Source: Adapted from Swarbrooke (1999).

Past research on sustainable tourism often resulted in providing a micro solution to what is essentially recognised as a macro problem (Wheeler, 1991). Even though it would be more convenient to neglect the sustainable tourism debate, the issues must be addressed for the purpose of this research in order to understand a suitable approach for the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

The terms sustainability, sustainable tourism and sustainable development are used interchangeably throughout the literature. Those who have attempted to explore the differences in the former terms are Butler (1999), Harris and Leiper (1995). Liu (2003: 460) avoids a debate on the terminology of these words and states:

‘Sustainability’ is broadly considered state-focused which implies steady life conditions for generations to come; ‘sustainable development’ is more process-oriented and associated with managed changes that bring about improvement in conditions for those involved in such development. Sustainable tourism is conveniently defined as all types of tourism (conventional or alternative forms) that are compatible with or contribute to sustainable development.

In addition, it was noted that development does not necessarily involve ‘growth’ as it is a process of realising ‘specific social and economic goals which may call for a stabilisation, increase, reduction, change of quality or even removal of existing products, firms, industries, or other elements’ (Liu and Jones, 1996: 217). In agreement, Page and Connell (2006) state that it is clear that sustainable tourism does not imply a ‘no growth’ policy but does recognise that limits to growth exist and that environments must be managed in a long-term way. However Liu (2003) does not agree with the notion to limit growth, instead we must manage it. This growth must be managed in a way that is appropriate to the tourists, the destination, the environment and the host population. After all, it has been reiterated that tourism will continue to grow. This research is in agreement with the latter understanding of sustainability and sustainable tourism for the purpose of the outcome of the study. After all, this realisation is to imply steady life conditions for future generations. Furthermore, it makes sense not to limit growth but to set implications that will manage it.

Mc Cool (1995) indicates that in order for sustainable tourism to be successful, societies must consider the following: (1) how tourists value and use natural environments; (2) how communities are enhanced through tourism; (3) identification of tourism’s social and ecological impacts; and (4) management of these impacts. This is not always

considered as countries less developed, there has been little action about sustainability. Swarbrooke (1999) indicates their priority is short-term economic development, rather than longer term resource conservation. Even though economic development and growth may be a priority, it requires change in the long term, a rationale is needed in an attempt to remain sustainable.

Munt (1992) argues that divergence in the interpretation of sustainable tourism might be indicative of a coming crisis in attempts to produce a green print for tourism in developing countries. Although this argument is of obvious concern in terms of sustainable development, it is at national, regional, and local levels where attempts to operationalise sustainable tourism tend to appear most immediately relevant although by no means easy (Wheeler, 1993; Hunter, 1997). Therefore, this research may need to consider what destination level would be immediately relevant for the development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. In addition, if it may be adapted for use in a destination in Ireland or worldwide.

Liu (2003) indicates that there should be a balanced concept of sustainability. The origin of the concept may have derived from environmentalism however Butcher (1997) brings to light the bigger problems of poverty and under development rather than unplanned tourism and development, but the former issues must be solved. Sustainable tourism has gained the commitment of the commercial industry as Tjolle (2008:1) stated:

No longer an activity, sustainable tourism is set to become a feature.

However a question regularly asked is how sustainable is sustainable tourism? For example Collins (1999), asserts that if an explicit natural capital perspective is adopted, current sustainable tourism development cannot be considered as genuinely sustainable. Collins (1999) argues that the potential spill over affects from sustainable development, such as what started as a designated sustainable destination, may end up not being one. While managing excess capacity, a certain destination might also deflect demand to another tourist area and thus actually, export unsustainable tourism to neighbouring destinations (Collins, 1999; Velikova, 2001). Wheeler (1993: 128) points out,

How can we argue that spreading the tourist load spatially is solving the problem when one of the problems is the spatial spread of tourism.

All these, and other arguments, lead logically to Collins's assertion that sustainable tourism might not be as sustainable as is currently believed. Furthermore, Collins points out, the level of natural capital deemed adequate for sustainability by current generations may eventually prove insufficient in the future. These debates must be taken into consideration for the purpose of this research. While sustainable tourism is questionable, it is apparent the term and concept is here to stay. Furthermore an objective of this research is to develop a model to facilitate the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. With this in mind it is necessary to discuss the definitions of sustainable tourism while establishing one suited to the context of this research.

### **2.3 Defining sustainable tourism**

Sustainable tourism represents a direct application of the sustainable development concept which became popular in the 1980's. The origins of this rooted from environmentalism which grew in the 70's. Development of a definition for sustainable tourism has been attempted by many scholars and organisations (Eber, 1992; UNWTO, 1993; Gunn, 1994; Ioannides, 1995; Robson and Robson, 1996; UNWTO, 1998; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Byrd and Cardenas, 2007; Sangsan-anan, Thiengkamol and Thiengkamol, 2012). The numerous definitions and interpretations of sustainable tourism perhaps results in much of the confusion within the industry as well as its slow implementation (Godfrey, 1998; Graci and Dodds, 2010). With over two hundred different definitions of sustainable development and sustainable tourism, many critiques note it to be an ambiguous and idealistic concept with no universally accepted definition (Clarke, 1997; Collins, 1999; Miller, 2001; Johnston and Tyrell, 2005; Graci and Dodds, 2010). As pointed out by Liu (2003: 461):

Sustainability, sustainable tourism and sustainable development are all well-established terms that have been used loosely and often interchangeably.

The triple bottom line is a common theme evident in many of the definitions as they seek to minimise ecological and socio cultural impacts while providing economic benefits. Farrell (1999) refers to it as the 'sustainability trinity' as it aims for the smooth and transparent integration of the three. Therefore, in the context of the sustainable management of tourism, it is necessary to incorporate these. Sustainability has come to represent and encompass a set of principles, policy prescriptions and management methods which chart a path for tourism development. Such that a destination area's

environmental resource base (including natural, built, and cultural features) is protected for future development (Lane, 1994; Hunter, 1997). The following table contains a number of definitions of sustainable tourism.

**Table 2.1** Definitions of sustainable tourism

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable tourism is tourism and associated infrastructure that: both now and in the future operate within natural capacities for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources; recognise the contribution that people and communities, customs and lifestyles, make to the tourism experience; accept that these people must have an equitable share in the economic benefits of local people and communities in the host areas (Eber, 1992).</li> <li>• Tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future (UNWTO, 1993).</li> <li>• It must be capable of adding to the array of economic opportunities open to people without adversely affecting the structure of economic activity. Sustainable tourism ought not to interfere with existing forms of social organisation. Finally, sustainable tourism must respect the limits imposed by ecological communities (Payne, 1993).</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism in parks (and other areas) must primarily be defined in terms of sustainable ecosystems (Woodley, 1993).</li> <li>• Tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits successful development and well being of other activities and programmes (Butler, 1993: 29).</li> <li>• Tourism that can sustain local economies without damaging the environment on which it depends (Countryside Commission, 1995).</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (UNWTO, 1995).</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism is tourism which develops as quickly as possible, taking into account current accommodation capacity, the local population and the environment; Tourism that respects the environment and as a consequence does not aid its own disappearance. This is especially important in saturated areas; and Sustainable tourism is responsible tourism (quoted in Bramwell et al., 1996).</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecology processes, biological diversity, and life support systems (UNWTO, 1998: 21).</li> <li>• Tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community (Swarbrooke, 1999: 13).</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism is tourism that seeks to minimise ecological and socio-cultural impacts while providing economic benefits to local communities and host countries (Mohonk Agreement, 2000).</li> <li>• Sustainable Tourism is the balanced interaction of three basic factors within the tourism industry: proper stewardship of the natural and cultural resources; improvement of the quality of life of the local communities; and economic success that can contribute to other programs of national development (ICT, 2005: 136).</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism products are products which operate in harmony with local environment, community and cultures, so that these become the permanent beneficiaries (according to Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry in Bien, 2007).</li> <li>• [There is] overall consensus that [sustainable tourism] integrates economic, socio-cultural and ecological well being as well as futurity, equity and holism (Solimar, 2007).</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism is an industrial tourism activity that committed to make a least impact on the environment and local culture, while assisting to generate income for local people at tourism site (Sangs-anan, Thiengkamol and Thiengkamol, 2012).</li> </ul> |
|--|

Source: Adapted and modified from Butler (1999).

Following a review of the definitions identified in (Table 2.1), the conceptual definition most suitable for this research is the most comprehensive of all. The UNWTO (2004) formal definition of sustainable tourism:

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

Considering the definitions available, this appears to be most suitable in the context of the research topic. The definition incorporates sustainable development and sustainable tourism. It acknowledges that it may be applied to all aspects of tourism and that relevant stakeholder participation is required as well as strong leadership. Crucially it indicates that the process is continuous and that measurement is needed to ensure success (Graci and Dodds, 2010). Unlike those in Table 2.1, this definition identifies how it should provide tourist satisfaction and raise awareness of sustainability issues. As a result, this seems the most comprehensive definition for this research to be built upon. The definition focuses on the impacts, management and the control of tourism. This also sits well with the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT) definition of sustainable tourism:

Sustainable tourism is the balanced interaction of three basic factors within the tourism industry: proper stewardship of the natural and cultural resources; improvement of the quality of life of the local communities; and economic success, that can contribute to other programs of national development (ICT, 2005: 136).

In contrast to the remainder of the definitions of sustainable tourism outlined in Table 2.1, it also outlines that tourism can contribute to other programs of national development. This aspect of the definition indicates the significance of sustainable tourism. How it does not only encompass the management and marketing of the tourism sector, but also contributes to planning, infrastructure and agriculture among many other

issues of destination development. Most importantly, Hunter (1997) wrote that sustainable tourism should not be regarded as a rigid framework, but rather as an adaptive paradigm which legitimises a variety of approaches according to specific circumstances.

The search for sustainable tourism within the industry is coming from all stakeholders according to the forces of social change (Prosser, 1995; Liu, 2003 in Mbaiwa and Stronza, 2009). The four forces of social change are (1) dissatisfaction with existing products; (2) growing environmental awareness and cultural sensitivity; (3) realisation by destination regions of the precious resources they possess and their vulnerability; (4) the changing attitudes of developers and tour operators.

If the stakeholders search for it, then it is they who must drive the application of it. As sustainable tourism is a market choice, without the consumer there can be no sustainable tourism business (Tjolle, 2008). The demand for responsible products has been recognised (Chafe and Honey, 2005; SNV, 2009; Mil-Homens, 2011; Nielson, 2012). It is considered necessary to assess stakeholders understanding of sustainable tourism (Wilson, Fesenmaier and Van Es, 2001; Byrd and Cardenas, 2007). By understanding sustainable tourism, it allows the stakeholders to have informed participation (Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2004; Byrd, 2007; Byrd, Cárdenas and Greenwood, 2008). The study will therefore first have to determine if the stakeholders understand sustainable tourism before attempting to establish if there is a demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland.

#### **2.4 Stakeholder involvement in sustainable tourism**

Sustainable development and sustainable tourism have evolved through the collaboration and coming together of stakeholders. The development of tourism in a sustainable manner is unattainable without stakeholder participation (Ap, 1992; Gunn, 1994; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal, 2002; Andriotis, 2005; Byrd, Cardenas and Dregalla, 2009). It is imperative to recognise stakeholders when managing tourism more sustainably and to take account of their different perspectives on the related issues (Bramwell, Henry, Jackson, and Van der Straaten, 1996; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Dodds, 2007; Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins, 2013). Clarke (2008) outlined conditions required for effective participation processes to take place.

The organisational structure of a destination is perceived as a network of interdependent and multiple stakeholders (Cooper, Scott and Baggio, 2009; d'Angella and Go, 2009). It is this which the quality of the experience and hospitality offered by the destination depends (March and Wilkinson, 2009; Hawkins and Bohdanowicz, 2011). The necessity of creating links with stakeholders has been widely acknowledged in tourism ever since the publication of Murphy's Community Approach 1985 (Hall, 1999; Sirakaya et al., 2001; Simpson, 2008; Clarke, Raffay and Wiltshier, 2009). Murphy (1988) contended that mutually beneficial partnerships were essential for tourism planning. Stakeholders should not only be recipients of sustainable tourism plans but are needed to participate in all steps of management covering the planning process (Southgate and Sharpley, 2002; Byrd, 2003). This includes implementing, evaluating and monitoring (Thiengkamol, 2008; Thiengkamol and Thiengkamol, 2012). Public consciousness is also an essential factor to facilitate the stakeholders to participate in the sustainable management of tourism (Thiengkamol, 2009, 2011, 2012). A study conducted in Ireland that piloted a model of sustainable indicators, stated that the main difficulty encountered was engaging with the public (Morrissey, Griffin and Flanagan, 2010). Never the less, difficulties found with participation may be overcome through the implementation of a myriad of stakeholder participation tools (Hanrahan, 2008).

For the purpose of this research, the investigative approach through the involvement of key stakeholders in sustainable tourism is particularly important. Freeman's (1984) argument regarding the notion of organisational management and stakeholder theory is universally accepted with the broad consideration that a stakeholder is:

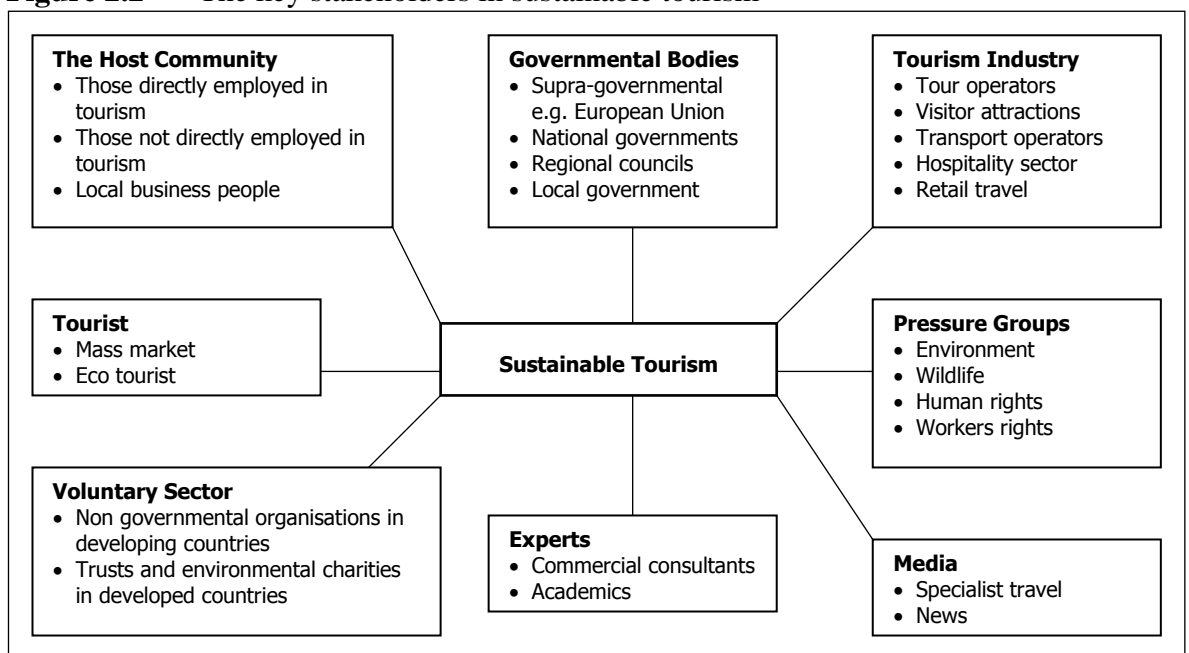
Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives.

This definition implies a view of a stakeholder that goes beyond those with purely formal, official or contractual ties to an organisation as recognised by Sheehan and Brent Ritchie (2005). In the context of tourism, there has been a fundamental shift witnessed in the application of stakeholder theory. This is evident from an ethical business management tool towards planning and management. Despite this shift, Skinner (2006) highlights an elemental flaw within stakeholder theory, the underlying assumption of homogeneity. Stakeholder groups are heterogeneous, context specific and hold vastly different missions and value platforms (Robson, 1996; Beeton and Hardy, 2001; Robson and Skinner, 2006). The different expectations may cause conflicts



therefore a process of stakeholder management is required to achieve a balanced perspective among the stakeholder voices. Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins (2013) indicate that the lack of or ineffective stakeholder participation is a major obstacle to sustainable tourism realisation. This presents a challenge for the sustainable management of tourism. Bramwell and Lane (1993) praise sustainability as a positive approach that is intended to reduce the tensions and friction created by the complex interactions of the stakeholders of the tourism industry. Recognition and incorporation of the key stakeholders (Figure 2.2) has significant importance for the purpose of this research.

**Figure 2.2** The key stakeholders in sustainable tourism



Source: Adapted from Swarbrooke (2000: 17).

Many of the stakeholders in Figure 2.2 are similar to those in the list of stakeholders for destination management as outlined by the UNWTO (2007). However the stakeholders not outlined in (figure 2.2) are: economic development agencies, town centre management organisations, national park authorities, events and cultural organisations, destination representation agencies, local tourism consortia and partnerships, business support agencies and skills development organisations. By identifying this potential gap, it allows for Swarbrooke's model to be built upon. Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) identified 32 tourism stakeholders. Those most important according to DMO executives were: hotels, government (at different levels), attractions, board of directors (of the DMO), convention centre, DMO members, residents, restaurants, universities and colleges, local chamber of commerce, and sponsors. The importance of the stakeholders

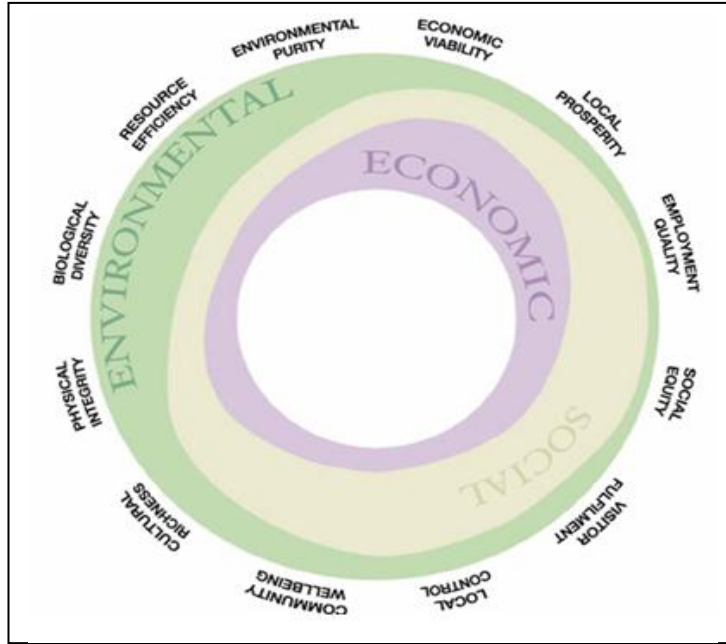
associated with the term sustainability is also evident in the UNWTO sustainable tourism principles that require the involvement of all stakeholders and ongoing monitoring of impacts.

Despite the many advantages of stakeholder participation in progressing the transition towards sustainability, it is not often fully co-ordinated in the sustainable management of tourism (Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005). Each stakeholder group has a different set of needs and expectations relating to a destinations performance and its sustainability goals. A destination adopting a sustainable management approach to tourism should attempt to design one development strategy that achieves the objectives of various stakeholders (Theobald, 2005). Furthermore, stakeholder perceptions are accepted as crucial for evaluating participatory processes and devising effective strategies for implementing sustainable tourism (Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Wall and Mathieson, 2006; Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins, 2013). Skinner (2006) highlighted it would be interesting to view the perceptions at the various levels but perhaps it would be a thesis of its own. Nevertheless, this research will need to involve a wide variety of tourism stakeholders to contribute to the research aims and objectives. Furthermore, holidaymakers and a broad base of national tourism businesses will need to be included for the assessment of the demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland. For this it will be necessary to take into account the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism.

## **2.5 The aims of sustainable tourism**

The agenda of the aims of sustainable tourism were identified in 2005 by UNEP and the UNWTO. For sustainable tourism to be successful, the interrelationship between the triple bottom line aspects must be acknowledged (Swarbrooke, 1999; Byrd, Cárdenas and Greenwood, 2008). The twelve aims are mapped upon the triple bottom line (Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3** The 12 aims of sustainable tourism



Source: Adapted from ECOTRANS, UNWTO (2006).

Movement toward the 12 aims of sustainable tourism is a well-established objective in Europe (Flanagan et al., 2007). The twelve aims should be included for the scope of effective sustainable management of tourism (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Flanagan et al., 2007). The economic aims are economic viability, local prosperity, employment quality and social equity. The social aims are comprised of visitor fulfilment, local control, community wellbeing and cultural richness. The environmental aims are physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency and environmental purity.

These aims have provided a beneficial baseline for sustainable tourism however there have since been further developments. Cultural heritage has grown in significance possibly due to the growth in cultural tourism (UNWTO, 2009). Furthermore, cultural heritage is fragile and easily damaged if not taken care of (IFT, UNESCO, 2007). Therefore, the aims could be modernised to provide cultural heritage with the significance required. As the aims are identified as a major milestone in the literature, these will be embedded into the theoretical framework to assess the demand for sustainable tourism. The aims are identifiable as a baseline within many policy instruments and tools for sustainable tourism.

## **2.6 Policy instruments and tools for the sustainable management of tourism**

The utilisation of policy instruments and tools for the sustainable management of tourism can aid in improving and maintaining resources for the future of the industry. Panayotou (1994) indicated that sustainable development requires new and effective policies in which economic instruments play an important role. The concern with economic instruments is that the other aspects may not be addressed. However, Logar (1999) indicated that the economic instruments allow the hidden costs of production and consumption to be accounted for in a cost-effective way. As a result, they are helpful in simultaneously achieving the environmental, economic and social policy objectives.

The most common way of classifying the policy instruments in the sustainable tourism literature are mandatory and voluntary (Honey and Steward, 2002; Rivera, 2004). Through this division, it addresses the obligation of the industry to implement a policy instrument imposed by national or local legislation or, on the other hand, go further by implementing voluntary policy instruments which implies going beyond legislation (Font and Harris, 2004; Zamudio, 2005). However the commitment from management is required to ensure the implementation of these. As Kuhre (1995) and Chan (2008) indicated, without management's commitment to implement an Environmental Management System (EMS), the program is likely to fail.

Stakeholders in the tourism industry are slowly adopting a voluntary approach to achieve sustainable development because of the threat from possible regulation (Foh, 1999). This is a move to pre-empt any form of regulation as well as a competitive strategy, especially in tourism markets where there is competition in terms of environmental performance. There is an array of tools to promote sustainable tourism at various levels and with different foci (Table 2.2). The ten major groupings of the tools include lists of techniques to assess or measure various aspects of sustainability. These 'tools' otherwise referred to as 'techniques of sustainability' are of significant importance for destination management.

**Table 2.2** The tools of sustainability

<p><b>1 Area Protection</b> Varying categories of protected area status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National parks</li> <li>• Wildlife refuges and reserves</li> <li>• Biosphere reserves</li> <li>• Country parks</li> <li>• Biological reserves</li> <li>• Areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs)</li> <li>• Sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental auditing</li> <li>• Ecolabelling and certification</li> </ul> <p><b>5 Carrying capacity calculations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical carrying capacity</li> <li>• Ecological carrying capacity</li> <li>• Social carrying capacity</li> <li>• Environmental carrying capacity</li> <li>• Real carrying capacity</li> <li>• Effective or permissible carrying capacity</li> <li>• Limits of acceptable change (LACs)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 Industry regulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government legislation</li> <li>• Professional association regulations</li> <li>• International regulation and control</li> <li>• Voluntary self-regulation</li> <li>• Corporate social responsibility</li> </ul>	<p><b>6 Consultation and participation techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Public attitude surveys</li> <li>• Stated preference surveys</li> <li>• Contingent valuation method</li> <li>• The Delphi technique</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 Visitor management techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning</li> <li>• Honey pots</li> <li>• Visitor dispersion</li> <li>• Channelled visitor flows</li> <li>• Restricted entry</li> <li>• Vehicle restriction</li> <li>• Differential pricing structures</li> </ul>	<p><b>7 Codes of conduct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the tourist</li> <li>• For the industry</li> <li>• For the hosts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Host governments</li> <li>◦ Host communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Best practice examples</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlays</li> <li>• Matrices</li> <li>• Mathematical models</li> <li>• Cost-benefit analysis (COBA)</li> <li>• The materials balance model</li> <li>• The planning balance sheet</li> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Local production</li> <li>• Access to basic human needs</li> <li>• Access to facilities</li> <li>• Freedom from violence and oppression</li> <li>• Access to the decision-making process</li> <li>• Diversity of natural and cultural life</li> <li>• Rapid rural appraisal</li> <li>• Geographic information system (GIS)</li> </ul>	<p><b>8 Sustainability indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource use</li> <li>• Waste</li> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Local production</li> <li>• Access to basic human needs</li> <li>• Access to facilities</li> <li>• Freedom from violence and oppression</li> <li>• Access to the decision-making process</li> <li>• Diversity of natural and cultural life</li> </ul>
	<p><b>9 Footprinting and carbon budget analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holiday footprinting</li> <li>• Carbon emissions trading</li> <li>• Personal carbon budgets</li> <li>• Carbon offsetting</li> </ul>
<p><b>10 Fair trade in tourism</b></p>	

Source: Adapted from Mowforth and Munt (2009).

The beneficial outline of the tools of sustainability from Mowforth and Munt (2009) may be built upon. For example, the visitor management techniques section outlines many tools including zoning. Finding appropriate forms of tourism development according to the characteristics of destination areas must not end with policies such as proactive zoning. Sustainability is also about how tourists and tourism operators actually behave and function in relation to the utilisation of natural resources (Hunter, 1997). Therefore education and visitor satisfaction monitoring would be beneficial however they have not been incorporated. Education is required to provide those working in the industry with the appropriate knowledge. Education of the local population will encourage community-based sustainable management of the environment and the locals will be aware of the financial incentives to protect their natural resources (Björk, 2000; Kline,

2001; Sharpley, 2006; Yunis, 2006; Ghosh, 2012). The table of tools also seems to ignore the economic impact of tourism (Hanrahan, 2008). Furthermore, there is no specific tool to maximise benefits to the local communities and reduce potential leakages associated with tourism from the economy.

The ability of the environment to resist change may diminish as a certain destination develops. The tools listed under the headings of area protection, industry regulation and environmental management techniques would contribute to the management of the environment. In addition, to resist change, carrying capacity levels may need to be adjusted accordingly. One way to overcome these problems, as Collins (1999) suggests, is to plan for some reserve capacity in advance. Mowforth and Munt have listed seven types of carrying calculations that may be used (Table 2.2).

It is indicated by Liu (2003) that there is a need to develop policies and measures that are not only theoretically sound but also practically feasible. Without effective means to translate ideas into actions, sustainability would run the risk of becoming irrelevant. Furthermore, Liu indicates how it should be researched to have ways of applying the principles of development to mainstream. There should be greater efforts to promote standards and best practices in tourism internationally through accreditation bodies such as the UNWTO and the GSTC (Font and Swallows, 2002; Liu, 2003). This could also be integrated to Mowforth and Munt's tools of sustainability.

Certification has been placed by Mowforth and Munt under the heading of environmental impact assessment. Theory proposes certification will differentiate sustainable from unsustainable tourism organisations (Font, 2009). Sustainable tourism certification has been established as an effective tool to implement sustainable management (Conaghan and Hanrahan, 2010). Never the less, it has been identified that while certification is a valuable tool for the tourism industry, it is likely to be more effective if used along with other management tools as part of an integrated strategy (Buckley, 2002a). However tourism certification programs encompass an array of criteria specific to area protection, carry capacity, visitor management techniques and so forth. This may be complemented with indicators of sustainable tourism as these are beneficial to assess the sustainability of tourism.

## 2.7 Indicators of sustainable tourism

The use of indicators for monitoring progress towards sustainability has been advocated and discussed by tourism researchers and tourism organisations over the years (Allin et al., 2001; Miller, 2001; Ceron and Dubois, 2003; UNWTO, 2004; Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Hyde et al., 2007; Griffin, 2007; Morrissey, Griffin and Flanagan, 2010; EC, 2013). Indicators of sustainable tourism are not only useful for measuring progress. They can also stimulate a learning process to enhance the overall understanding of environmental and social problems, facilitate community capacity building and help in identifying sustainable development goals and suitable management strategies (Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005; Reed et al., 2006). Indicators have been promoted as useful, reliable and as an easily comprehensible assessment and communication tool for decision makers (OECD, 2003; UNWTO, 2004). From a review of literature, varying definitions of indicators have been identified (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3** Definitions of indicators

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An indicator is a means devised to reduce a large quantity of data down to its simplest form, retaining essential meaning for the questions that are being asked of the data (Ott, 1978).</li><li>• An indicator is something that helps you understand where you are, which way you are going and how far you are from where you want to be (Hart, 1996).</li><li>• An indicator is a sign – something that points out, or stands for something else (Gallopín, 1997).</li></ul>
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Characteristics seen from the former definitions is that indicators are variables which summarise or simplify relevant information; they make visible or perceptible phenomenon of interest; are amenable to management; and quantify, assess, monitor, measure and communicate the relevant information (Gallopín, 1997; Wight, 1998, Roberts and Tribe, 2008). According to Roberts and Tribe (2008) the definitions of indicators of sustainability encompass the elements of traditional indicators. They must also take into consideration the interconnectivity in the tourism system (Weaver, 1998b; Callens and Tyteca, 1999; Sirakaya et al., 2001; Twining-Ward and Butler, 2002) and reflect the distinctive triple bottom line attributes of the destination or entity to which they would be applied. This is agreed upon by Mitchell (1996: 3) who thinks there is some validity in this perspective and posits that:

needs vary between groups of people (both indicator developers and users) so some indicators may be selected that are good reflections of local concerns and cultural diversity.

Since the early 1990's, the UNWTO has pioneered the development and application of sustainable indicators for tourism and destinations. The need to acknowledge contextual differences has been supported by the UNWTO through their core and site specific destination indicators of sustainable tourism (Table 2.4). These are an example of a top-down approach (Manning et al., 1996). The UNWTO acknowledges that there are issues that may be common to all destinations. However there are also the differences in sustainable issues at destinations which require site specific indicators that need to be addressed.

**Table 2.4** Core indicators of sustainable tourism

Core Indicator	Specific Measures	Generic Indicator Groupings
1. Site Protection	Category of site protection according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) index	Ecological
2. Stress	Tourist numbers visiting site (per annum/peak month)	Ecological
3. Use Intensity	Intensity of use in peak period (persons/hectare)	Ecological
4. Social Impact	Ratio of tourists to locals (peak period and over time)	Social
5. Development control	Existence of environmental review procedure or formal controls over development of site and use densities	Planning
6. Waste Management	Percentage of sewage from site receiving treatment (additional indicators may include structural limits of other infrastructural capacity on site, such as water supply)	Ecological
7. Planning Process	Existence of organised regional plan for tourist destination region (including tourism component)	Planning
8. Critical Ecosystems	Number of rare/endangered species	Ecological
9. Consumer Satisfaction	Level of satisfaction by visitors (questionnaire based)	Ecological
10. Local Satisfaction	Level of satisfaction by locals (questionnaire based)	Social
11. Tourism Contribution to local economy	Proportion of total economic activity generated by tourism only	Ecological

Source: Adapted from UNWTO (1996) and Dymond (1997).

The 11 practical core indicators are deemed relevant to any destination (Weaver and Lawton, 2006). Twining-Ward and Butler (2002) and Robert and Tribe (2008) indicate that the sustainability indicator framework (Table 2.4) of the UNWTO is a useful starting point for the development of tourism sustainability indicators. However they are too narrow in focus, lacking clear tourism stakeholder participation in the indicator development process and omitting site or area-specific conditions. The measurement of environmental impact has been a driving force behind the growth of sustainable tourism. This is also emphasised throughout the UNWTO's core indicators (Table 2.4) as there has been a privileging of environmental indicators, 6 of the 11 (Robert and Tribe, 2008). This was made apparent through the indicators appointed generic



groupings by Dymond (1997). From a review of the practical indicators in light of the ‘sustainability trinity’ and designated groupings, economic has not been adequately included. Indicator eleven is economic based, this is solely one category that Dymond may have overlooked. Furthermore, cultural indicators were omitted (Robert and Tribe, 2008). It is essential to have the environment, economic, social and cultural heritage aspects apparent within the indicators considering their significance.

There have since been a large number of indicators created for destinations with different objectives, perspectives, dimensions and foci (Manning, 1999; Miller, 2001; UNWTO, 2004; Valls, Vila, Bustamante and Guzmán, 2004; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Sancho, García and Rozo, 2007; Griffin, 2007; Morrissey, Griffin and Flanagan, 2010; EC, 2013). Indicators of sustainable tourism are the most broadly used and advocated tool to assess the sustainability of tourism destinations (Twining-Ward and Butler, 2002; UNWTO, 2004). In Ireland, there is one model in the sustainable tourism literature, the DIT-ACHIEV model which was designed in Ireland through the use of sustainable tourism indicators (Flanagan et al., 2007). Furthermore, the European Commission launched the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) in 2013 which is specifically intended for sustainable management at destination level. The ETIS was developed as a result of lessons learned from previously existing indicator system initiatives. The UNWTO (2004: 8) advocates the use of sustainable indicators as a:

fundamental part of overall destination planning and management, and an integral element in efforts to promote sustainable development for the tourism sectors at all scales.

In 2004, the UNWTO published a guidebook for the establishment of sustainable indicators for tourism destinations. It was acknowledged that tourism destinations differ considerably from each other and that a good indicator set for one destination is not necessarily appropriate for another. Meadows (1998) argued that sustainable indicators are often poorly chosen. This is also perceived by Manning (1999: 179), who reports that the task force commissioned by the UNWTO to develop sustainable indicators for tourism development ‘was immediately faced with the tension between different perceptions of what a “good” set of indicators really was’. The criteria for ‘good indicators’ as listed by various researchers are the resonance to target audience, robustness, credibility, sensitivity, availability of data, regularity, cost-effectiveness, lack of ambiguity and comparability (Moldan et al., 1997; Allin et al., 2001; Ceron and

Dubois, 2003). It is very difficult to find sustainable indicators for the assessment of tourism destinations that meet these ideal characteristics (Hughes, 2002).

Manning (1999) recognises that there is no single 'perfect' set of indicators; each user of the indicators will have their own ideal set dependent upon what uses they intend for the information. As with many frameworks and concepts, any selection of indicators is bound to be subjective in nature and therefore open to criticism (Roberts and Tribe, 2008). The significance of defining a 'good' set of indicators (Manning, 1999) and the right number of indicators has been frequently discussed (Meadows, 1998; Bossel, 1999; UNWTO, 2004). It is highlighted by Bossel (2001) that reducing the indicator set is necessary to allow practical implementation. However to determine the sustainability of a tourism destination, indicators are needed for both the destination and for the destination's contribution to a bigger system.

Mowforth and Munt (2009) contend that the search for indicators has shown the linkages between economic, social and environmental issues. Roberts and Tribe (2008) indicate that the focus of sustainability indicators is at the macro level, being destinations or communities. They argue that small tourism enterprises also have the potential to help tourism destinations progress toward sustainable objectives. Therefore it is beneficial that the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) developed criteria for hotels, tour operators and tourism destinations. The development of these criteria is a major milestone for sustainable tourism.

## **2.8 Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria**

The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria is a global initiative dedicated to promoting and mainstreaming sustainable tourism efforts around the world. This was launched by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) which is a coalition of 40 organisations (Appendix A) and was initiated by Rainforest Alliance, UNEP, the United Nations Foundation (UNF) and the UNWTO. The idea of the GSTC criteria emerged from a United Nations meeting that took place in Mohonk in 2000. At the first international gathering of certification programs, there was a consensus among existing certification programs and other organisations about the need to develop a common minimum standard for any credible third-party certification system. The GSTC strives to promote sustainable tourism through a common language, and one of its key

objectives is to facilitate the creation and adoption of universal principles for sustainable tourism. The GSTC (2013) mission:

Promoting the widespread adoption of global sustainable tourism standards to ensure the tourism industry continues to drive conservation and poverty alleviation.

In support of its mission, the GSTC maintains that the objectives: creating universal principles, making destinations sustainable, promoting market access, increasing knowledge and accreditation help to verify sustainability. The Rainforest Alliance commissioned a feasibility study of the possible creation of a global accreditation body that would set standards for certification of the tourism industry. Together they launched the GSTC criteria for hotels and tour operators at the World Conservation Congress in October 2008. This was followed by the GSTC criteria for destinations in 2012.

The criteria launched are the minimum standard that any tourism business should aspire to reach. These are to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring that tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation. The criteria indicate what should be done, not how to do it. This role is fulfilled by performance indicators, associated educational materials, and access to tools for implementation. As indicated previously (Bossel, 2001), indicators are needed for both the destination and for the destinations contribution to a bigger system. The GSTC even though titled 'criteria' is complimentary with indicators. The indicators are designed to clarify what each criterion means and how to measure it.

With the consensus that it was unrealistic to achieve a single international tourism certification program, the intent of the international baseline standard and a global accreditation body is to combat the explosion in the range of programmes certifying to sustainable standards (Font, 2002; Honey, 2002; UNWTO, 2002; Bendell and Font, 2004) and subsequently, to establish credibility. It may also help as a tool to monitor and diminish non-authentic programs that exist and greenwashing. As a result, it is understandable why there has been a call for an international accreditation body to regulate certification programs (Font and Buckley, 2001; Font, 2002; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). This system will provide transparency on which certification

program to implement; one which has been accredited and complies with the GSTC criteria.

A worldwide accreditation logo can also boost brand recognition. In 2002, Font had stated that the most likely method to create stronger brands would be through takeovers, mergers and alliances. Thus the GSTC has established this process and should contribute to a stronger brand which is vital to gain market share as well as to communicate the green message to the international tourism market. A growing number of certification programs and networks have endorsed the GSTC (Russillo, Honey, Rome and Bien, 2007).

In developing the initial set of GSTC criteria, there were consultations with sustainability experts. More than 60 existing certifications around the world and more than 4,500 criteria were analysed. The twelve aims for sustainable tourism were the starting point in selecting the GSTC criteria. The criteria were mapped onto these aims. For a common understanding of sustainable tourism, the GSTC developed the criteria for hotels and tour operators and destinations around the need to demonstrate effective sustainable management within the related headings (A-D) as outlined in Table 2.5.

**Table 2.5** Four categories of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

<p><b>GSTC criteria for hotels and tour operators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Demonstrate effective sustainable management.</li> <li>b. Maximise social and economic benefits to the local community and minimise negative impacts.</li> <li>c. Maximise benefits to cultural heritage and minimise negative impacts.</li> <li>d. Maximise benefits to the environment and minimise negative impacts.</li> </ul> <p><b>GSTC criteria for destinations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a: Demonstrate sustainable destination management</li> <li>b: Maximise economic benefits to the host community and minimise negative impacts</li> <li>c: Maximise benefits to communities, visitors, and cultural heritage and minimise negative impacts</li> <li>d: Maximise benefits to the environment and minimise negative impacts</li> </ul>
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Source: Adapted from GSTC (2008, 2012).

The four categories of the GSTC criteria for hotels and tour operators are titled differently to those for the destination. The GSTC for destinations have the social aspect addressed along with cultural heritage. This is important to note for discussion later in the thesis. The list of GSTC for hotels and tour operators, version 1 (2008) may be seen in detail in Appendix B and have since been updated (2012). The GSTC criteria for destinations (2012) are in Appendix C.

The criteria have been developed in accordance with the ISEAL Code of Best Practice, it will undergo consultation every two years and will receive input until feedback is no longer provided. Therefore the GSTC conform to the definition of the UNWTO (2005):

Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

The GSTC is the latest and most comprehensive global criteria. Even though there is a lack of factual evidence on the suitability of the GSTC for varying destinations, two of Irelands leading attractions, Guinness Storehouse and the Cliffs of Moher have been certified conforming to this standard. This research will assess the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland in context of the GSTC criteria. Initiating with the first category, demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism.

### **2.8.1 Demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism**

Through demonstrating effective sustainable management of tourism, the GSTC provides prospects of enhancing a positive future for the tourism industry. The main reason people visit Ireland as a holiday destination is due to the environment, economy and socio-cultural aspects (Fáilte Ireland, 2008). Therefore it is critical for Ireland to demonstrate effective sustainable management. The implementation of sustainable management systems will aid in improving and maintaining resources for the future of the tourism industry. The success of a business's sustainable management system depends on the effective integration and internalisation of the system by employees at all levels (GSTC, 2011). Therefore, to ensure its implementation, the personnel of the tourism industry need to be educated through appropriate training. Education and training programs are an important principle of sustainable tourism (Jamieson and Noble, 2000). Training is an important component of the drive to increase the adoption of multiple aspects of sustainable management in a tourism business (Dodds and Joppe, 2005; PAGS, 2005; Duc, 2009). This is significant as we near the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

A criteria of the GSTC is to have a procedure to keep an up to date list of legal requirements as to ensure compliancy with the relevant legislation and regulations. International, local legislation and regulation are necessary to control the most fundamental and serious impacts of tourism (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). Therefore it

would be useful if the relevant tourism legislation and regulations are assembled (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). It would provide transparency for tourism management as law for tourism is sometimes in a related specific field rather than a tourism law category (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). For example, regulations for tourism buildings and infrastructure may be contained in laws relevant to planning. GSTC also have a criteria specific to the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure. According to SATC (2007) tourism is now achieving sustainability in its design, construction and operations.

As part of the GSTC, information is to be provided to customers about interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage as well as explaining appropriate behaviour while visiting. Information on the interpretation of a location is a key visitor management strategy to achieve sustainable tourism (Lane, 1994; Barrow, 1995, 1996; Wearing and Neil, 1999; Eagles et al., 2002; Kuo, 2002; Newsome et al., 2002; Tubb, 2003; Viljoen, 2008). It enhances the quality of the visitor's experience, knowledge of the location and influences appropriate behaviour (Cooper et al., 1998; Moscardo, 1998, 1999; Beaumont, 2001; Ham and Weiler, 2002; Bramwell and Lane, 2005; Kim, 2007). It will aid in the conservation of a location (Sharpe, 1976; Beckmann, 1991; Wearing and Neil, 1999). It will provide enjoyment (Kreger and Mench, 1995; Bright and Pierce, 2002; Moscardo, Woods, and Saltzer, 2004). It is best provided in an informal fashion (Moscardo, 1998) so enjoyment can remain an important element (Ham, 1992; Screven, 1995; Bright and Pierce, 2002; Moscardo, Woods, and Saltzer, 2004). If stringent conditions are met, it can reduce impacts (Littlefair and Buckley, 2008; Coghlan and Gooch, 2011) otherwise, interpretation does not change either attitudes (Tubb, 2003) or impacts (Boon, Fluker and Wilson, 2008; Littlefair and Buckley, 2008; Buckley, 2012). Having identified the significance of information and interpretation, this may be provided through promotional materials which would complement another GSTC criterion.

The GSTC has a criterion specifically so that promotional materials are accurate and complete. This would also contribute to maximise customer satisfaction. After all, the customer is the central focus of the tourism experience, satisfaction among tourists is paramount (Maddox, 1985; Geva and Goldman, 1991; Reisinger and Waryszak, 1994; Crompton and Love, 1995; Foster, 2010; Ziegler et al., 2012). If the materials are

accurate then it leads to realistic expectations (Honey and Rome, 2001; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Thorn and Ramthun, 2009). In branding a destination, it needs to be sustainable, believable and relevant (Morgan et al., 2002; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). In Ireland, customer satisfaction is measured through the Fáilte Ireland visitor attitude surveys.

The demonstration of effective sustainable management may be conducted through the implementation of sustainable tourism certification. It may also help businesses gain competitive advantage in highly competitive environments as ‘going green’ has been recognised as an attribute to gain advantage (Appiah-Adu and Singh, 1998; Hurley and Hult, 1998; Rangel, 2000; Coglianese and Nash, 2004; Mil-Homens, 2011). For the construction of the theoretical framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism, it will be necessary to integrate the issues and criteria discussed such as sustainable management systems, education and training, legislation and regulations to name a few. It is considered necessary to address these within the category demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism. This may be followed by the GSTC heading, maximise social and economic benefits to the local community.

### **2.8.2 Maximise social and economic benefits to the local community**

The GSTC have outlined several criteria to maximise social and economic benefits to the local community and minimise negative impacts. Jamal and Robinson (2012) describe the tourism industry as one of the global economic success stories of the last 40 years. The tourism industry, like most industries, primarily aims at maximising profits (WTO, 2000; Cooper et al., 2008; Tourism Research Australia, 2010; Moeller, Dolnicar and Leisch, 2011). Tourism provides an important source of income as well as development for developed and developing countries to both public and private sectors (Padure and Turtureanu, 2005). Sustainable management of tourism may contribute to community development due to the economic benefits the sector can generate (Caldicott and Fuller, 2005).

The sustainable management of tourism is important for social benefits to the tourists and residents of the local community (Craik, 1995; Besculides et al., 2002; Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012). It is a critical component in fostering global support for community

well-being (Trau and Bushell, 2008). Social sustainability would contribute in maintaining and strengthening the quality of life in local communities (Denman, 2006; Viljoen, 2007). It is important to promote the improvement of infrastructure and public services (Gibson et al., 2003; Fletcher, 2008; Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012). Infrastructure will serve the needs of the local community as well as help attract and satisfy visitors (Bosselman, Peterson, and McCarthy, 1999; Endresen, 1999). By maximising social benefits to the local community it can contribute to local employment.

Tourism-related employment has received much attention. It is often noted for its negative aspects (de Kadt, 1984; Smith, 1989; Levy and Lerch, 1991; Momsen, 1994; Pattullo, 1996; McLaren, 1998; Faulkenberry, Coggeshall, Backman and Backman, 2000; McKenzie-Gentry, 2007). For instance mass tourism employment has often been criticised for failing to pay the legal wage (Pattullo, 1996; Faulkenberry et al., 2000; Gmelch, 2004; Mc Kenzie, 2007). Those that profit from the industry must respect the law and acknowledge their legal and ethical responsibilities (George and Varghese, 2007). On the other hand, local employment is a principle that has been well established in the tourism literature (Twining-Ward, 2003; UNWTO, 2004; Viljoen, 2007; Roberts and Tribe, 2008; Strickland-Munro, 2010) as a significant source of income and employment for local residents (UNEP, 2003; Jamieson, 2006; Simpson, 2008; Bui, 2009; Rachel and Dodds, 2010). Through the employment of locals, it provides them with a feeling of responsibility (Olsen, 1997; Campbell, 1999; Ross and Wall, 1999; Page and Dowling, 2002; Boyd and Singh, 2003; UNWTO, 2004; Simpson, 2008). Importing employees diminishes tourism benefits to the local community (Smith and Puczko, 2008; Bristow, Yang and Lu, 2010). The GSTC have criterion specific to the employment of local residents, equitable hiring and legal protection.

Equitable hiring and work force diversity is the prerequisite for a successful and efficient organisation (Aghazadeh, 2004; Thomas, 2009). Being equitable is a principle that defines the condition for sustainable tourism achievement (Dodds and Joppe, 2005). However, it is necessary to offer skills training (UNEP, 2003). Equitable hiring is addressed by law in many developed countries. These are interlinked to human rights. If this issue failed to be recognised as a relevant category, the progression to sustainable tourism would not be possible (George and Varghese, 2007).



The tourism industry experiences leakage not only by importing employees but how it is dominated by some powerful corporations (Tourism Concern, 1999; Krause, 2005; Cernat and Gourdon, 2012). This may be overturned by providing a market for local goods and services (Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007; Nyaupane and Poudel, 2011). It would provide greater economic benefit (Tourism Concern, 1999; Krause, 2005; Cernat and Gourdon, 2012). Even more so through supporting the local entrepreneurs by enabling them to develop and sell sustainable products. Without the influence of local entrepreneurs, it is doubtful that a tourism industry would evolve (Koh and Hatten, 2002). They are drivers of development (Hall, 2004; Tinsley and Lynch, 2007; Ryan, Mottiar, Quinn, 2012) and have been critical to the initial and continued development of the industry (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Ryan, Mottiar, Quinn, 2012). Through supporting them, it would entail community involvement which is crucial to the sustainable development of tourism (Murphy, 1985, 1988; Olsen, 1997; Ross and Wall, 1999; Scheyvens, 1999; Campbell, 1999, 2002; Jones, 2005; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Viljoen, 2007; Simpson, 2008; Lee, 2012). Supporting local entrepreneurs provides both social and economic benefits while enhancing the tourists experience.

While maximising the social and economic benefits to the local community it is also necessary to minimise the negative impacts. For the protection of indigenous and local communities, it is important to have a code of conduct for activities. As Persoon and Minter (2011) indicated, protection of communities serves a purpose in the protection of biological diversity and of traditional knowledge. Ethical tourism development can provide incentives to support indigenous and local communities' traditional customs and values (McNeely, 2004; Olsder et al., 2006; Trau and Bushell, 2008). The development of a code of conduct for activities in the local community should be carried out with the consent of and in collaboration with the community (Mauro and Hardison, 2000). Tourists are generally the largest audience for codes of conduct since it is hoped that these codes will modify their behaviour and hence reduce their perceived negative impacts (Mason, 2003; Cole, 2007; Ali, 2009). Implementation of a code of conduct should also serve a role in communicating guidelines that the activities carried out in the area do not jeopardise the provision of basic services to neighbouring communities, for example water, energy, sanitation. Furthermore, they should prevent social degradation and avoid exploitation (Denman, 2006; Viljoen, 2007). Following a review of issues that may maximise social and economic benefits to the local

community, it is evident how several are of more relevance to developing countries. For instance certain aspects surrounding employment are not relevant in the context of tourism in Ireland due to labour laws. This is important to note, however that they will be integrated to the theoretical framework presented at the end of the chapter.

### **2.8.3 Maximise benefits to cultural heritage**

Cultural heritage tourism is to reflect the national representation of a destination. The appropriate management of culture heritage is crucial not only for identity but also the self-respect and dignity of a tourism destination (Endresen, 1999). Once communities lose the character that makes them distinctive and attractive to non residents, they have lost their ability to vie for tourist-based income in an increasingly global and competitive marketplace (McCool, 1995). It is important that communities maintain their character and culture. This is what differentiates them and it is often recognised as providing a competitive advantage. Maintaining their character will provide benefits through profits generated from tourism, developments and marketing.

Sustainable tourism should help conserve cultural heritage and traditional values (UNWTO, 2011). The revenue it generates may be used to maintain the cultural heritage properties (STCRC, 2010). This is pivotal as tourism has often been criticised of having a high potential of adverse impacts on local and indigenous cultural values (Graburn, 1976; Pizam, 1978; Anderson, 1990; Cohen, 1992; Hollinshead, 1992; Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Picard, 1995). This has lead to issues of questioning authenticity for example of cultural motifs (Asplet and Cooper, 2000). The Fáilte Ireland strategy for cultural tourism in Ireland (2006) focuses upon the marketing and promotion of cultural heritage. It is necessary to also maximise the benefits to cultural heritage as tourism has a role in preserving the dignity of people and the viability of their cultural tradition (Walle, 1993). A focus within the UNWTO code of ethics for tourism is that it is a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and a contributor to its enhancement (NWHO, 1999). The GSTC criteria have been developed to contribute to its enhancement.

The GSTC indicated several criteria to benefit cultural heritage. One of these is a code of behaviour for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites. This is beneficial to inform visitors on how to be responsible when visiting an area. There are heritage

management agencies that have published a code of conduct, set of rules and regulations (IFT, UNESCO, 2007). However heritage site managers have a limited understanding of tourist behaviour and how to manage it strategically (Beeho and Prentice, 1997; Garrod and Fyall, 2000; Watson and McCracken, 2002; Malcolm-Davie, 2004; Landorf, 2009). It was identified that the interpretation provided by heritage interpreters is only comprehensible to educated elite of heritage devotees (Bramwell and Lane, 1993; Garrod and Fyall, 2000). This clarifies the necessity of developing a code of conduct with the collaboration of the local community.

There is also a criterion to contribute to the protection of local historical, archaeological, culturally and spiritually important properties and sites, and ensuring that access to local residents is not impeded. These are vital considering many heritage resources are lost due to physical deterioration from inadequate maintenance or neglect. Damage inflicted upon local culture is often irreparable (NWHO, 1999). An essential element of cultural sustainability is to control the harmful effects of tourism through addressing responsible behaviour and prevent cultural distortion (Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Viljoen, 2007). Tourism is increasingly regarded as a positive force for the preservation of nature and culture (Joshi, 2012). A way to protect and respect sacred sites is through well-planned ethical tourism development (McNeely, 2004; Olsder et al., 2006; Trau and Bushell, 2008). Therefore it would be most valuable if the GSTC were integrated to the planning process for the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

Physical impacts from visitors can cause threats to heritage sites (IFT, UNESCO, 2007). The GSTC indicate elements of local art, architecture or cultural heritage should be used in the operation of the business. In addition, that historical and archaeological artefact should be protected by not selling, trading or displaying artefacts unless permitted by law. Respect and sensitivity should be shown to artefacts (The Australian Heritage Commission and CRC for Sustainable Tourism, 2001). Many holidaymakers visit Ireland for the cultural heritage. With economic benefits to be gained from cultural heritage (IFT, UNESCO, 2007), it is an incentive for the industry to contribute to the protection of it. After all, there is a significant economic contribution as cultural heritage visitors spend almost twice as much as city break visitors (Fáilte Ireland, 2010; Nugent, 2012). The criteria to maximise benefits to cultural heritage will be integrated

to the theoretical framework in order to determine the supply of sustainable tourism in context of these criteria.

#### **2.8.4 Maximise benefits to the environment**

The environment is the main resource for many tourism destinations. Tourism destinations rely on clean seas, unpolluted water, pristine mountain slopes and litter-free streets (WTTC et al., 1995; Welford and Ytterhus, 2004). If there was an absence of an attractive environment, there would be little tourism (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Resources need to be conserved considering the environment is the main resource for many tourism destinations (Cooper et al., 2008; Dolnicar and Leisch, 2008). Tourists are interested in having a holiday at an unspoilt natural area (Dolnicar and Leisch, 2008). Therefore, the destinations have an incentive to protect and enhance their environmental assets (Weaver and Lawton, 2006). Particularly in Ireland as it is known for its 'clean green image'.

As with any form of industrial development, the physical environment will be impacted upon by tourism. It can impair ecosystems due to pollution contributed to the atmosphere, oceans and freshwater (Gossling, 2002; Gossling and Schumacher, 2010; Gossling et al., 2011; Buckley, 2012). Considering tourism products must be consumed where they are produced, the physical environment where the production or consumption takes place also matters (Rigall-I-Torrent and Fluvia, 2011). Tourism produces direct and indirect impacts on the environments resources (Buckley and Araujo, 1997; Cummings, 1997; Gossling, 2000, 2002; Chan and Lam, 2003; Hindle et al., 2007; Aall, 2011; Charara, Cashman, Bonnell, and Gehr, 2011; Smerecnik and Andersen, 2011; Moeller, Dolnicar and Leisch, 2011; Buckley, 2012). The tourism impacts caused are often anthropogenic, meaning that they are caused by the relationship between man and the environment (Middleton and Sieber, 1999). Many tourism businesses cater to the short term benefits and interests at the expense of environmental quality (Milne, 1998; Smith and Bui, 1998; Mason, 2003; Bui, 2009). Tourism has the potential to make a positive contribution to the environments resources (Saalinen, 2006). After all, environmental protection is easier and less expensive than environmental correction (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill, 2008). These may be initiated through the use of the GSTC criteria.

The GSTC have criteria specific to conserving resources of water and energy. These indicate that wastewater should be treated effectively and the use of harmful substances is substituted. Furthermore, that there should be practices in place to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, air and soil contaminants. This is a necessary measure as the environment performs the function of a waste disposal system for the tourism industry (Holden, 2008). Further criteria are specific to the purchasing of environmentally friendly products and reduce the use of disposable and consumable goods.

The GSTC criteria target to reduce pollution. GHG emissions from all sources are to be measured and procedures are put in place to reduce and offset. Consumers have increased awareness of carbon reduction issues (Hu, Horng, Teng, Chou, 2012) due to the growing recognition of the rapidly increasing impact of carbon reduction and the importance of sustainability (Laing and Frost, 2010; Hu, Horng, Teng, Chou, 2012). Action is vital with regards to carbon emissions. After all, if everyone were to pollute like the Irish, three planet earths would be needed to survive (The World Resources Institute, 2008).

Research has indicated that there has been a realisation of personal responsibility for the state of the environment (Ballantyne, Packer, Hughes and Dierking, 2007; Powell and Ham, 2008; Falk, 2009; Ballantyne, Packer, Falk, 2011). It is said that the popularity of natural wildlife tourism destinations have led the public to become more aware of and interested in environmental issues (Higginbottom, 2004; Newsome et al., 2004; Rodger, Moore, and Newsome, 2007). There are GSTC criteria specific to conserve biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes. In essence, it addresses the protection of wildlife species, the use of those native to the area and the contribution to the support of biodiversity conservation.

The GSTC does not seem to indicate how to address resident community attitudes toward conservation. Many authors identified that their negative attitudes are associated with failures to conserve biodiversity (Infield, 1988; Mordi, 1991; Parry and Campbell, 1992; Newmark et al., 1993; Hitchcock, 1995; Ite, 1996; Alexander, 2000; Newmark and Hough, 2000; Walpole and Goodwin, 2001; Sekhar, 2003; Weladji et al., 2003; Mbaiwa and Stronza, 2011). According to Ziegler et al. (2012) it is essential to

understand the social dimensions for the effective management of wildlife tourism activities. This again signifies the importance of the stakeholder and local community involvement for the sustainable management of tourism.

This research will assess the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland in context of the GSTC criteria reviewed. The criteria will be integrated to the theoretical framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism. An organisation could integrate the GSTC to its management through self-regulation of a certification program which conforms to this standard. With this in mind it is necessary to have an in-depth discussion of sustainable tourism certification.

## **2.9 Sustainable tourism certification**

Certification has been highlighted as a key tool in the sustainable management of tourism (Honey, 2002; Bien, 2007; Conaghan and Hanrahan, 2009). The first milestone in certification was in 1987 with the Blue Flag Campaign for beaches. This began in Denmark and today is worldwide, the only program that has a large market share of its niche target market having certified 3,200 beaches (Bendell and Font, 2004). The Blue Flag has had an impact on destination choice, to the point that today having a Blue Flag means something, not having one means that the beach does not meet the specific environmental standards. Indication of how one global label can be a huge success.

There is an interchange of the words, ‘certification’ and ‘eco labels’ throughout the literature on tourism certification. Eco labels according to Font (2001: 3) are:

methods [that] standardise the promotion of environmental claims by following compliance to set criteria, generally based on third party, impartial verification, usually by governments or non-profit organisations.

Eco labels are a seal of approval and provide information to consumers about specific products such as the impacts from using a product. An ecolabel in the trade sense is effectively a certification of a particular level of environmental performance in the production of an internationally tradable product (Buckley, 1992). Eco labels are focused on the interrelated concepts of certification and accreditation. For the purpose of this research, the term certification, predominantly sustainable tourism certification will be used. It focuses not only on the environment but economic and social, cultural heritage performance and may be accredited.

The recognition of sustainable practice through certification has been considered the most promising of voluntary approaches (Foh, 2001) as it is used to enhance the credibility of the sector and awareness (Honey, 2002; Bauckham, 2005; Bien, 2007). Certification is regarded by Schianetz et al. (2007) as a concept, their definition being, 'a concept is an idea of how to achieve sustainability.' Voluntary initiatives such as codes of conduct, manuals, awards and certification have increased in number due to the lack of methods to enforce sustainable management in tourism (Font, 2002). UNEP (1998) considered the development of these voluntary tourism schemes as:

'the best way of ensuring long-term commitments and improvements'.

These programmes have evolved from codes of conduct with the addition of measurement and monitoring methods (Synergy, 2000; UNWTO, 2002). The history of tourism certification has been continuously evolving with the modification to many aspects for instance initially certifying beaches to the recent launch of sustainable tourism criteria for destinations (GSTC, 2012). The reason for such developments is the benefits from its implementation.

The implementation of sustainable tourism certification is currently self-regulated. It is thought that certification may become a requirement to trade (Bendell and Font, 2004) to ensure tourism organisations are working towards sustainable management. Therefore, it is questioned if the voluntary approach to implementing certification should be changed to being enforced (Tepelus, 2010). Afterall, the pressure to implement sustainable practices has increased due to the growth in tourists (Dolnicar and Leisch, 2008; Conaghan and Hanrahan, 2009). In addition to the tourism stakeholder interest that tourism operations implement high standards and achieve certification (Russillo, Honey and Rome, 2006). However certification includes costs that make it a challenge for small businesses to implement (Russillo, Honey and Rome, 2006). There are many benefits to be gained from the implementation of certification (Table 2.6).

**Table 2.6** Benefits of implementing certification

<p><b>Benefits for those tourism organisations that are certified:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps the businesses to improve as the process is educational and it teaches them elements of sustainability in their operations and see the changes required (Bien, 2006).</li> <li>• Business tends to be more efficient, reduction in operation costs.</li> <li>• Increased recognition with the marketing advantage and attracts more clients (Font and Bendell, 2002).</li> <li>• Business may obtain a competitive advantage (Appiah-Adu and Singh, 1998; Hurley and Hult, 1998; Rangel, 2000; Veliyath and Fitzgerald, 2000; Coglianese and Nash, 2004; Hawkins, 2004; Tjolle, 2008; Mil-Homens, 2011).</li> <li>• A better reputation and become more popular over those not certified.</li> <li>• Government support if it is a government backed program (Font and Bendell, 2002).</li> <li>• Possible promotion at travel fairs and on official tourism board websites (Bendell and Font, 2004).</li> <li>• Increase in use of certified organisations in comparison to those non-certified (Font and Buckley, 2001).</li> <li>• Strengthening firms' marketing image (Kotler, John and Makens, 2003).</li> <li>• Economic benefits accrued from lower resource bills (Bhaskaran et al., 2006; Rivera and deLeon, 2005; Tzschentke et al., 2004; 2007; Pizam, 2009; Jarvis, Weeden, and Simcock, 2010).</li> </ul> <p><b>Benefits for the consumers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides them with responsible choices, can distinguish which business is truly responsible.</li> <li>• Increases public awareness through the sighting of the logo, the tourist may tend to act more respectfully, better quality of service offered to the consumers (Bien, 2007).</li> </ul> <p><b>Benefits for the government:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps to protect their market niche (Bien 2006, 2007).</li> <li>• Lowers the regulatory costs of environmental protection, provides economic benefits (Bien, 2006).</li> <li>• Raises the industry standards in health, safety, environment and social stability, (Bien, 2006, 2007).</li> <li>• Lowers the regulatory costs of environmental protection and can help reduce poverty, especially in rural areas by requiring the economic benefits (Bien, 2007).</li> </ul> <p><b>Benefits for the environment and local communities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to protect and benefit the environment (Font and Buckley, 2001; Font, 2002; Rivera and deLeon, 2005; Bien, 2006; Russillo et al., 2008; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010).</li> <li>• The certified business is to respect the local culture and provide real social and economic benefits, benefits that are to be there for the long term (Bien 2006, 2007).</li> </ul>
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Modified and adapted from Bien (2006): (Appiah-Adu and Singh 1998; Hurley and Hult, 1998; Rangel, 2000; Veliyath and Fitzgerald, 2000; Font and Buckley, 2001; Font, 2002; Font and Bendell, 2002; Kotler, John and Makens 2003; Bendell and Font, 2004; Rivera and deLeon, 2005; Bhaskaran et al., 2006; Bien, 2006; Tzschentke et al., 2004, 2007; Russillo et al., 2008; Jarvis, Pizam, 2009; Weeden and Simcock, 2010).

The implementation of sustainable tourism certification provides an array of benefits (Appiah-Adu and Singh, 1998; Hurley and Hult, 1998; Rangel, 2000; Font and Buckley, 2001; Font, 2002; Font and Bendell, 2002; Kotler, John and Makens, 2003; Bendell and Font, 2004; Rivera and deLeon, 2005; Bhaskaran et al., 2006; Bien, 2006; Tzschentke et al., 2004; 2007; Russillo et al., 2008; Jarvis, Pizam, 2009; Weeden and Simcock, 2010). These are to the organisations that are certified, to the consumers, the government, environment, the local communities and the tourism destinations. As certification has its advantages, such as showcasing good practice and encouraging voluntary improvements (UNEP, 1998; Honey, 2002; Font and Harris, 2004; Bendell and Font, 2004; Bien, 2006) it is an important tool for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The clearest benefit is self-regulation and this saves the Local Authority and Regional Tourism Authority financially. Therefore certification would be seen as a component worthy of incorporating into the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.



### **2.9.1 Sustainable tourism certification programs**

There are over 100 certification programs for tourism and hospitality, with many of them overlapping in sector and geographical scope (Font and Buckley, 2001; Medina, 2005; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). A global study carried out in 2000-2001 by the UNWTO found that the greatest proliferation (78%) of programs is predominantly based in Europe (UNWTO, 2002). There are over seventy sustainable tourism certification programs in existence today (Bien, 2007). Bien (2006) indicated that within the ten years between the Earth Summit in 1992 and the International Year of Ecotourism in 2002, more than 60 environmental tourism certification programs were developed. However, few had taken socio-cultural factors into account and a majority evaluated accommodation only. Certification relies to a certain extent on government support. Their financial support is crucial to half of the existing programs (Font and Bendell, 2002). It was estimated by Bendell and Font (2004) that without the support of the government, two thirds of schemes would not survive.

There is a myriad of programs of varying quality, criteria, content and scope. It has been suggested that the abundance of certification programs generates confusion (Hansen, 2007) to the extent that they will all be ignored (Lubbert, 2001; Font, 2001; Morris, Hastak and Mazis, 1995; Brown et al., 1997; Diamantis, 1998; Buckley, 2002a). This will impede on the effective functioning of a certification program (Sharpley 2001; Honey and Steward, 2002; Sanabria, 2002; Eichhorn et al., 2008). The confusion has been recognised as a barrier to consumer demand (Carlsen et al., 2001; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Proto et al., 2007; Jarvis, Weeden, and Simcock, 2010) and is a factor that hinders the success of certification (Hansen, 2007; Bowen and Clarke, 2009). It is argued by Font (2010) that current world efforts should be towards reducing the number of certification programs and consolidating standards.

With the large number of certification programs in existence globally, certification faces a number of challenges. The most challenging is how to reduce the number of overlapping and competing programs and how to raise consumer awareness (Hamele, 2002). As stated by Conroy (2007:290):

If businesses and consumers are satisfied with any claim to certification, the concept may become diluted to the point of uselessness.

There is a good chance of this happening due to the sheer numbers in existence and how the consumers and travel industry are facing confusion (Honey, 2002). Reducing the number of tourism certification programs is challenging as certification has the difficulty of creating standards that will suit each subsector where the impacts vary (Font, 2001). Certification criteria is an area of disagreement and causes concern in the tourism industry (Honey and Rome, 2000; Synergy, 2000; Font and Buckley, 2001). Research in China identified four barriers to international schemes. These were cost, language, culture and governance, such as the differences for culture criteria between China and the West are going to differ vastly (Li and Cai, 2004; Ye and Xue, 2005; Tian, 2006). Goodwin (2010) expressed concern over the implementation of an international certification program as it may undermine the effectiveness of strong national schemes. Buckley (2001) emphasises a perception for the majority of tourists that a single simple scheme, with a small number of different programs is required to achieve customer acceptance.

Once an organisation is certified, it is important to communicate their responsible management practice in order to be influential. A government backed education program is an excellent way to create awareness and consumer consciousness. However it then relates back to again, which program should they choose? Consumer consciousness differs depending on areas where certification is more or less powerful. Such as in the Nordic countries, the Nordic Swan is recognised by the majority of shoppers. This is predominantly due to multi million euro government backed education campaigns. In addition to a huge range of products that have the Nordic Seal (Conroy, 2007). Therefore not only must there be consumer consciousness, there must be a direct demand for it so that business will implement a certification program.

### **2.9.2 Demand for sustainable tourism certification**

The greater the awareness of certification programs, the demand for sustainable tourism products and services may grow (Dodds and Joppe, 2008). In 2002, Honey indicated the consumer demand for sustainable tourism certified products and services had been largely unknown. To date, this is unknown for the Irish tourism market. Research on certification in Ireland has been narrow as many studies fixated on the organic market (Roddy et al., 1994; O'Donovan and McCarthy, 2002; Moore, 2006; Connolly, 2008). However Fáilte Ireland (2009) indicated certification will become more and more

important as the demand for responsible products grows. Without certification, consumers would have to conduct their own research on the responsible management of a product or service, involving a considerable investment of time and effort (Buckley, 2002a). However, Budeanu (2007) and Buckley (2012) stated few tourists select sustainable products specifically.

Theoretical references made to the barriers of consumer demand of certified products is due to the plethora of labels, lack of information, lack of consumer awareness and price (Carlsen et al., 2001; Medina, 2005; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Proto et al., 2007; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). Products are often perceived to cost more than those non-certified. The tourists believe certified products are more expensive (Lubbert, 2001). Possibly why the recommendation was made by Buckley (2002) that tourism business should only implement certification and make improvements to the extent of demand and consumers' willingness to pay for such improvements. Consumer's decisions are often dominated by criteria such as price (Dodds and Joppe, 2005). According to Tjolle (2008) savvy customers will pay a premium for a sustainable tourism certified product or service. Whereas Conaghan and Hanrahan (2010) query why a premium should be paid when there is such a plethora of certifications in existence. Furthermore, tourism businesses benefit economically due to the cost saving procedures implemented through certification criteria. A study conducted by Fáilte Ireland (2008) investigated holidaymakers willingness to pay more for green alternatives and 20% indicated 'It's worth paying more'.

It has been suggested that certification labels are not sufficiently powerful to influence customer choice (Font and Wood, 2007; Lorenzini, Calzati, Giudici, 2011). A potential reason being is the lack of awareness of certification labels. A contributing factor to the low level of awareness is ineffective marketing (Font, 2001; Honey, 2002). It is known to hinder the success of a program (Hamele, 2002; Hansen, 2007; Conaghan and Hanrahan, 2010). It is also attributed as a barrier to consumer demand (Carlsen et al., 2001; Medina, 2005; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Proto et al., 2007; Jarvis, Weeden, and Simcock, 2010). There must be consumer consciousness of certification programs as to create a demand for a business to adopt a certification program. The awareness of sustainable tourism certification enables consumers to distinguish products and services that have implemented responsible practice. With the ground swell of certification

programs and tourism being an international industry, Buckley (2002) indicated the international certification programs will be more useful than localised programs, alike from the tourist perspective (Font, 2002). Moreover, if these are supposedly a tool to influence purchasing decisions and as peer pressure, the international programs will remain (Kahlenborn and Domine, 2001; Font, 2002). It is suggested that the more widespread and easily recognised a label is, the more consumers will use it (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010).

It is essential to have a market that will purchase certified products and services, otherwise the tourism industry would be slow to adopt sustainable tourism certification. There are tourists who are unwilling to change their behaviour and purchase sustainable tourism products (Miller et al., 2010). Establishing findings on the demand for sustainable tourism certification in Ireland would enable the Irish tourism businesses to make an informed approach on whether or not to implement a certification program. With the significance of certification as an effective tool for the sustainable management of tourism, the theoretical framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism will also examine the certification issues raised by the academics. The issues such as the awareness and proliferation of programs, influence on purchasing decisions and if there is a preference for one label recognised globally.

### **2.9.3 Credible sustainable tourism certification**

Certification as a sustainable management tool strives toward high quality standards (Medina, 2005; Eichhorn et al., 2008; Mil-Homens, 2011). It has been noted to have its drawbacks, such as not being equitable and efficient (Font, 2002; Sasidharan, Sirakaya and Kerstetter, 2002). It has been hurt by a lack of credibility (Honey, 2002; Hansen, 2007; Mil-Homens, 2011). In the hotel sector there is the question whether “green” hotels are a marketing ploy or the beginning of a permanent change in hotel business practices and operations, Pizam (2008) finds both to be true. Many unscrupulous hoteliers are claiming that they are “green” by simply hanging a sign and declaring themselves to be “green” (Heung et al., 2006). As certification is a mechanism to inform the consumer on their choice, it is vital to ensure that certification claims are reliable and meaningful and that there is no greenwashing. Buckley (2002) indicated that the most basic test of a tourism certification program is whether it is accepted by tourists as meaningful and reliable.

If stakeholders were satisfied with any claim to certification, the concept may become diluted (Conroy, 2007). False claims will not convince the consumers and it will not demonstrate anything (Toth, 2000; Font, 2001; Bien, 2006). Certification without credibility does not have a market. The implementation of certification that has been verified by an independent third party is vital to ensure credibility. The concern of certification credibility and the need for third party verification arose due to the proliferation of labels (Toth, 2000; Font, 2002). It is imperative to the process of compliance assessment that a certification program should work against.

The tourism certification process contains five steps: setting standards, undertaking assessment, certifying this assessment, accrediting certification, recognition of the value of the certificate, and acceptance by the industry and the consumers. Development of the global accreditor (GSTC) provides an additional layer to the process of compliance assessment, which is the accreditation of the certification program.

The aim of the certification process is that the label will be recognised by consumers or distribution channels, considered as added value leading to its acceptance in the marketplace and to support the marketing of companies that make the grade (Font, 2002; Toth, 2002). The applicants will be assessed against a set of standards. The assessment or otherwise called, audit is the process where the business is examined, measured, tested and the conformance of requirements specified are determined (Toth, 2000; Font, 2001). This process will vary depending on the criteria, the criteria will determine the evidence required to prove conformity. Following the assessment, verification can take place by three parties (Font, 2001). First-party verification is a self-evaluation, second-party verification is undertaken by the certification organisation who decides whether or not to award the certification logo. The most expensive and reliable is third-party verification which is undertaken independently by either the applicant or the awarding body, a key element of credible certification for any sector. The verification assures the certified product or service conforms to the specific requirements (Toth, 2000; Mil-Homens, 2011). According to Font (2001) and Mil-Homens (2011), a certified organisation that has been verified by an independent third party will obtain more recognition.

Following the assessment is the stage of certification in which a third party gives written assurance to the consumer that a product, process, service, or management system conforms to the specified requirements (Toth, 2000). Interestingly some certification systems insist that the awardees should publish their results to provide a view of the strengths and areas for improvement (Font, 2001). In assessing the demand for sustainable tourism, the issue of greenwashing and the need for verification by an independent third party will be integrated to the development of the theoretical framework.

#### **2.9.4 Sustainable tourism certification accreditation**

Accreditation is important to the credibility of sustainable tourism certification. Font (2001) indicates that systems in the tourism industry where awardees are geographically spread will have to use more than one verification company for the purpose of accreditation. The need for this has also cultivated as a result of the certification programs lack in legitimacy and authenticity. It must be noted that sometimes there is confusion of terminology of the word accreditation as programs such as Australian NEAP use this word as a meaning of certification (Font, 2001). Accreditation is a procedure by which an authoritative body or peers verify that another body is competent to carry out specified tasks (Toth, 2000). It is a process that certifies the certifier (Toth, 2000; Honey, 2002; Buckley, 2002b) or ‘audit the auditors’ (Font, 2001).

As the concept of certification may become diluted and not authentic, those involved in certification must ask themselves, to what standards are they certified? Accreditation will bring credibility to certification through receiving international or regional recognition (Maccarrone-Eaglen and Font, 2002). The purpose is to grant recognition and acceptance by the industry as a strong voluntary standard. Font (2001) indicates it is a quality symbol and a meaningful difference that influences purchasing behaviour.

A certification program has to be accredited by an accreditation body in order to be able to carry out recognised audits against standards in a particular country (Maccarrone-Eaglen and Font, 2002). There are a variety of accreditation bodies that are respected across or in their own sector (Font, 2002). In fact about 1,500 bodies globally (Toth, 2000) accredit 140,000 certification bodies, each one is only licensed to work in a particular country and context. However, the only way local labels will stand in a

competitive position against the international initiatives is through having an overarching accreditation system (Font, 2002). In addition, few labels will ever reach a critical mass that is likely to influence national tourism, let alone international. The development of a global accreditation system will hopefully encourage the recognition of labels internationally among the consumers. Font's (2002) paper shows how an accreditation system can allow the setting of international standards that make certification processes somewhat comparable. The use of an internationally accredited logo can create a stronger brand that has a fighting chance to reach the international tourist. It has been questioned whether an accreditation system could happen in tourism as the results in Europe were discouraging (CREM, 2000; Hamele, 2001) due to it being challenging to establish applicable criteria for such a diverse industry (Maccarrone-Eaglen and Font, 2002). However, this has changed through the establishment of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. They are required to play a role to ensure credibility and eliminate the concern of false claims such as greenwashing. The concerns related to certification and the GSTC will be integrated into the framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland.

## **2.10 Towards a framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland**

As with all forms of travel, sustainable tourism must be viewed from both demand and supply sides (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Getz, 2008). The absence of an existing framework that could be used to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism resulted in the development of a specific framework being generated for the purpose of this thesis. In light of the discussion around contextual issues on the sustainable management of tourism, the major themes which have emerged from the theory were combined to construct a theoretical framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism.

For the construction of the framework, it was necessary to bear in mind the stakeholders who would be participating in the assessment. This includes holidaymakers to Ireland and national tourism businesses. This was for the simple reason that holidaymakers are a major driving force behind sustainable tourism (Tjolle, 2008). The tourism businesses are pivotal to fulfil the demands of the market; providing a supply of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, a varied sample of tourism stakeholders will be involved to

determine the supply of sustainable tourism. Stakeholder participation is necessary to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. It is imperative to recognise stakeholders when managing tourism more sustainably and to take account of their different perspectives on the issues (Bramwell, Henry, Jackson, and Van der Straaten, 1996; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Dodds, 2007; Waligo, Clarke and Hawkins, 2013). Stakeholders of sustainable tourism will enable insight to the various related aspects of the framework.

An outline of the framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland is provided (Table 2.7). The framework is split into two sections for the purpose of the research objectives (a, b). The first section of the theoretical framework is concerned with the need to assess the demand for sustainable tourism and the second is to assess the supply of sustainable tourism.

**Table 2.7** An outline of the framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland

Demand for Sustainable Tourism	Supply of Sustainable Tourism
Understand sustainable tourism	<b>Demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism</b>
Demand for sustainable tourism	Sustainable management system (SMS)
Demanding support to convert to Sustainable Tourism	Sustainable Tourism Certified Business
Demand supports to implement Sustainable Tourism	Training in Sustainable Tourism
Demand to offset carbon emissions	Compliance with legislation and regulations
12 Aims for Sustainable Tourism	Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure
Economic Viability	Information and interpretation is provided
Local prosperity	Promotional materials are accurate and complete
Employment quality	Customer satisfaction measured, corrective action taken
Social Equity	Stakeholder, public participation and partnerships
Visitor fulfilment	<b>Maximise social and economic benefits to the local community</b>
Local Control	Support initiatives for community development.
Community Wellbeing	Local residents employed and training offered
Cultural Richness	Equitable in hiring women and local minorities.
Physical Integrity	Legal protection of employees is respected.
Biological Diversity	Implement a policy against commercial exploitation.
Resource Efficiency	Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased.
Environmental Purity	Support local entrepreneurs
Awareness of sustainable tourism certification	Code of conduct
Recognition of tourism certification labels	Basic services to neighbouring communities.
Demand for one sustainable tourism certification label	<b>Maximise benefits to cultural heritage</b>
Potential greenwashing associated with cert. claims	Code of behaviour for / culturally/historically sensitive sites
Verification by an independent third party	Contribute to the protection of sites.
Demand for sustainable tourism certified product/service	Use elements of local art/architecture/cultural heritage
Purchase certified products or services	Protection of historical and archaeological artefacts
Demand for sustainable tourism certification in Ireland	<b>Maximise benefits to the environment</b>
	Conserving resources
	Reducing pollution
	Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems, and landscapes

Source: Adapted from (Swarbrooke, 2000; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; UNWTO, 2007; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; GSTC, 2008, 2012).

The first section to assess the demand for sustainable tourism initiates with the understanding of sustainable tourism. It is necessary to assess stakeholders understanding of sustainable tourism (Wilson, Fesenmaier and Van Es, 2001; Byrd and



Cardenas, 2007). The framework also seeks to identify the demand for sustainable tourism in addition to the various supports and resources to convert to sustainable tourism. The assessment would be considered incomplete without taking into account major milestones such as the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism. This is followed by indicators specific to sustainable tourism certification as it is a key tool in the sustainable management of tourism and to enhance the credibility of the sector (Bauckham, 2005; Bien, 2007; Conaghan and Hanrahan, 2010). Certification has been mapped upon several assessment indicators due to the significance certification has as a regulatory instrument, such instruments provide the foundation of sustainability in tourism (Buckley, 2012).

The second section of the framework is to assess the supply of sustainable tourism. This section has been mapped upon indicators that conform to the GSTC (2008, 2012). These were integrated to ensure a robust framework that includes international best practice. The assessment of the supply commences with the demonstration of effective sustainable management of tourism. In order to identify the level of supply, this section examines the implementation of sustainable management systems, certification and is also concerned with the supply of training in sustainable tourism. Furthermore, it assesses if the related GSTC criteria are implemented. The development of tourism in a sustainable manner is unattainable without stakeholder participation (Ap, 1992; Gunn, 1994; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal, 2002; Andriotis, 2005; Byrd, Cardenas and Dregalla, 2009). Therefore an assessment of stakeholder, public participation and partnerships has been included. This is followed with indicators related to maximising social and economic benefits to the local community. In order to identify this, it addresses community development and employment related issues. The category maximise benefits to cultural heritage incorporates core fundamental elements of tourism such as tourism interaction, protection of sites, the use of local art and architecture in the operations. The final category assesses to what extent benefits are maximised to the environment. In particular, it addresses purchasing policies favouring environmentally friendly products, the measuring of energy, water and greenhouse gas emissions and conservation. Both sections of the framework will combine to allow the researcher to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland.

## 2.11 Conclusion

In considering the literature on the sustainable management of tourism, a number of key concerns have emerged:

- The on-going debates in relation to the term sustainable tourism;
- The recognition of numerous definitions and interpretations of sustainable tourism;
- The importance of tools, indicators and best practice standards for the sustainable management of tourism;
- The need to recognise stakeholders when managing tourism; and
- The role of third-party sustainable tourism certification.

This chapter initially reviewed the definitions and issues of debate regarding the term sustainable tourism. The conceptual definitions of sustainable tourism most relevant for the context of this research is the UNWTO (2004) combined with the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT, 2005) definition as it indicates sustainable tourism can contribute to other programs of national development:

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them (UNWTO, 2004).

Sustainable tourism is the balanced interaction of three basic factors within the tourism industry: proper stewardship of the natural and cultural resources; improvement of the quality of life of the local communities; and economic success, that can contribute to other programs of national development (ICT, 2005: 136).

The definitions provide a general context in which the specifics of the research can be elaborated. Having acknowledged these, the research identified the need to move from definitional discussions to the practical implementation (Garrod and Fyall, 1998; Torres-Delgado and Palomeque, 2012). The literature provided an understanding on the sustainable management of tourism however concerns were raised regarding

recognising the stakeholders when managing tourism. It is imperative to take into account their perspectives on tourism management issues. The interrelationship between the triple bottom line aspects acknowledged through the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism are a beneficial baseline for sustainable tourism and identifiable within many policy instruments and tools imperative for the sustainable management of tourism. However these do not provide cultural heritage with the significance required. The GSTC however have allocated several criteria to maximise benefits to cultural heritage. The GSTC represents a global milestone in sustainable tourism as it developed specific applied criteria for hotels, tour operators and tourism destinations instead of the broad indicators of sustainable tourism which had more of a focus at the macro level. The GSTC provide a valuable international baseline standard which will be integrated into the model generated for this study.

The literature has highlighted that sustainable tourism certification is a key tool in the sustainable management of tourism. However it is also worth noting the importance of certification with an independent third party verification process to ensure credibility for the sustainable management of tourism. The discourse outlined an abundance of tools, indicators and best practice standards for the sustainable management of tourism, the practical application of these have received little academic attention in Ireland. While there are suggestions that the search for sustainable tourism within the industry is coming from all stakeholders according to the forces of social change (Prosser, 1995; Liu, 2003) the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland is yet to be fully realised. The tourism industry cannot afford to ignore the issue of changes in the pattern of demand and the type of tourism they offer (TSG, 2007). In order to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland, the most relevant themes such as the key stakeholders in sustainable tourism, the aims of sustainable tourism, policy instruments, tools and the GSTC criteria (Swarbrooke, 2000; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; UNWTO, 2007; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; GSTC, 2008, 2012) were incorporated to a theoretical framework. An understanding of the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism is necessary to make an informed approach in the sustainable management of tourism.

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# TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

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### 3.1 Introduction

Tourism destination management is an important part of controlling tourism's impacts. Destination management requires the integration of different tools, approaches and concepts to shape the management and daily operation of tourism-related activities. There is growing concern internationally about how best to conduct the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The sustainable management of destinations look beyond the individual performance of a business, company, local authority and other organisations. It looks toward the holistic and integrated level where the individual performance contributes to the greater goal of the destination as a whole. This chapter examines the theoretical background of tourism destination management to provide a comprehensive contextual guideline for the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

### 3.2 Concept of a tourism destination

Before discussing tourism destination management, it is necessary to understand the concept of a tourism destination. Tourism academics have attempted to clarify the nature of the tourism destination (Presenza, Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005; Presenza, 2006) which is widely used and defined differently (Framke, 2002; Longjit, 2010). Tourism destinations can be considered as complex networks that involve a large number of co-producing actors delivering a variety of products and services (Pearce, 1989; Hu and Brent Ritchie, 1993; Gunn, 1994; Ramirez, 1999; Buhalis, 2000; Murphy, Pritchard, and Smith, 2000; Silkoset, 2004; Haugland, Ness, Grønseth, Aarstad, 2011). It was highlighted by Andergassen, Candela and Figini (2013) that the tourism destination definitions in existence range from management studies, where it is mainly interpreted as a product, to tourism geography where the destination is intended as the offer of the territory. The numerous definitions for a tourism destination have been gathered into Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1** Definitions of a tourism destination

- A territorial system supplying at least one tourism product able to satisfy the complex requirements of the demand for tourism (Candela and Figini, 2012).
- A destination is a collective unit consisting of a number of individual firms (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2011).
- A tourism destination is a geographical region, political jurisdiction, or major attraction, which seeks to provide visitors with a range of satisfying to memorable visitation experiences (Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010).
- A destination is a well delimited geographical area (Hall, 2008) to which people travel and in which they choose to stay (Leiper, 2004; Bieger, Beritelli and Laesser, 2009).
- A local tourism destination is a physical space in which a tourist spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions and tourist resources within one day's return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management... (UNWTO, 2007: 1).
- A destination may be defined as a country, state, region, city or town which is marketed or markets itself as a place for tourists to visit (Beirman, 2003).
- A tourist destination is best explained as an area which is separately identified and promoted to tourists as a place to visit, and within which the tourism product is coordinated by one or more identifiable authorities or organisations (European Communities, 2003).
- A destination is a supply system correlated with a specific area (Tamma, 2002; Brunetti, 2002).
- A destination is a set of products, services, natural and artificial attractions able to draw tourists to a specific place, where the geographical location is simply one of the factors that comprises a destination (Leiper, 1995; Pechlaner, 2000; Martini, 2001).
- Destinations are amalgams of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers (Buhalis, 2000).

The destination is a geographical area to which the tourist goes (Leiper, 1990) and can be perceived at diverse geographical scales (Pearce, 1989; Laws, 1995; Cho, 2000; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Carter and Fabricius, 2006; Papatheodorou, 2006; Longjit, 2010; Dredge, Jenkins and Taplin, 2011). It has been highlighted that while tourists perceive the destination as a unit, offering an integrated experience or a destination product (Buhalis, 2000; Murphy et al., 2000), the experience or product is still produced and composed by the individual actors (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth, Aarstad, 2011). It has been highlighted that the success of individual actors, as well as the success of the entire destination, is dependent on efficient co-ordination and integration of individual companies' resources, products, and services (Beritelli, Bieger, and Laesser, 2007; Rodríguez-Díaz and Espino-Rodríguez, 2008; Haugland, Ness, Grønseth, Aarstad, 2011).

In a review of tourism destination theory, Longjit (2010) acknowledged there were four main characteristics. For the purpose of this study, a tourism destination may be defined according to these criteria: it is a particular geographical area; it must be selected and visited by tourists; it needs to provide some kinds of tourism products and services; and it involves multiple stakeholders. However the variation of scale throughout tourism

destination definitions stresses the need to define a tourism destination parameter to an appropriate scale for destination management.

### **3.3 Tourism destination parameter**

A tourism destination parameter should be to the scale that will function best for the tourism industry to manage the destination. The tourist may visit a single or multiple tourism destinations (Cho, 2000) and destinations within destinations (Carter and Fabricius, 2006). The tourist may perceive the destination at the scale of a purpose-built attraction, a town or a city, a tourism district, a province, a tourism region within one country, or a whole country. Excluding a purpose built attraction, the town or resort city seems to be the smallest level at which the tourist visits and all tourism services exist (Carter and Fabricius, 2006).

The terms, 'destination' and 'resort' have been seen to be used interchangeably in literature and have caused confusion. However if 'resort' means an established town which has a significant range of tourist facilities (NEDO, 1992) or a region where several holiday centres are located (Inskeep and Kallenbergher, 1992) then the research model to fulfil objective (e) will need to be applicable to these. For the purpose of this research, it has confirmed the distinction that destinations can be on any scale, they range from a whole country, a region such as the Spanish 'Costas', an island, to a village, town or city, or a self-contained centre such as Disneyland (Laws, 1995; UNWTO, 2007). Some destinations are artificially determined by political jurisdictions which fail to consider consumer preferences or tourism industry functions (Presenza, Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005). For instance the tourism industries function to manage the tourism destination.

The destination is an appropriate scale for considering sustainable management of tourism (Koeman et al., 2002). However, a parameter too large is problematic (Lee, 2001) while a parameter too narrow is not practical (Schianetz, Kavanagh, Lockington, 2007). European Communities (2003) indicate the central issue is that a destination has its own identity and that responsibility for its management has been determined. However, in theory it may vary from an area within a local council to an area that spans several municipalities. What Timothy (2001) classifies as third-order civil division is counties, townships, and municipalities. These lower-level frontiers would appear to

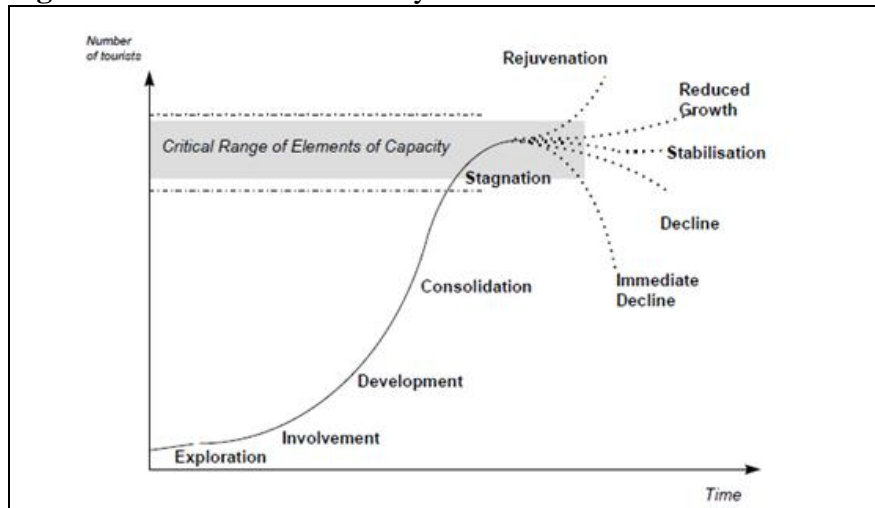
work best considering they have the fewest impacts on human interactions yet are acknowledged to be nonetheless significant.

Defining the geographical boundaries of the destination is a key activity. European Communities (2003) recommend that for practical reasons it is good to follow the municipal boundaries as this will facilitate political co-operation and the ease of data collection. Ritchie and Crouch (2007) agree that a formal definition of a destination is needed. After all the sustainable management practices will relate directly back to the destination as it has been defined. The definition of the tourism destination may be determined through stakeholder participation techniques and partnerships (UNWTO, 2007; Mowforth and Munt, 2009). This theory has provided understanding with regard to the tourism destination parameter. It has also clarified the need to define the destinations parameter for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. In order to examine the sustainable management of tourism (objective d), this research focuses on a study area at county level.

### **3.4 Destination lifecycle**

A tourism destination has several stages of evolutionary development. Butler's life cycle model is popular and useful to create an understanding of the destination development process (Pearce, 1995; Prosser, 1995; Agarwal, 1997; Weaver and Lawton, 2002). The evolution of a tourism destination is important for the planning and management of resources. Each stage of development allows for the possibility to consider sustainable management. This clarifies that any destination may implement the sustainable management of tourism.

**Figure 3.1** Destination lifecycle

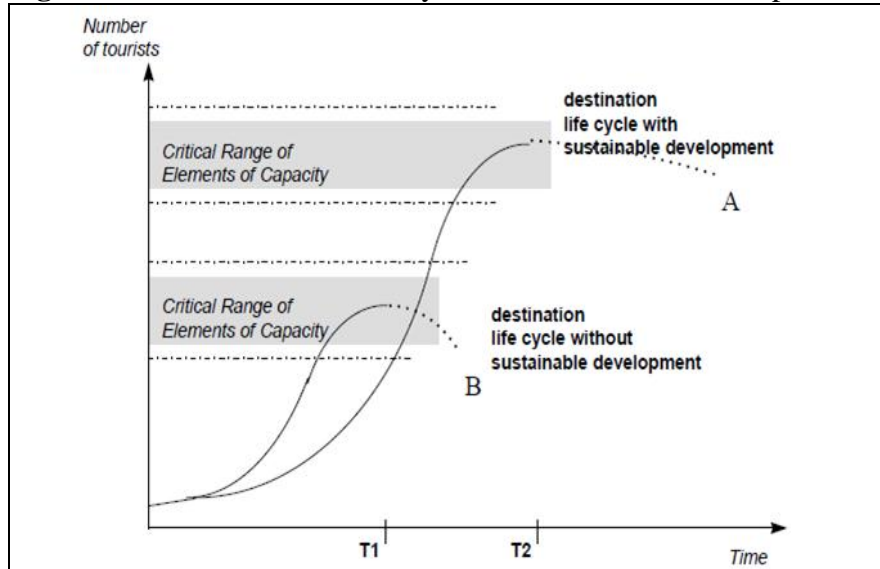


Source: Adapted from (Butler, 1980; Hunter and Green, 1995; Kian, 2009).

The number of tourist arrivals change through time due to the changes in the destinations supply and demand of tourists. The critical range of elements of capacity as seen in Figure 3.1 shows where maximum tourists can be hosted by the destination before deterioration of the environment and tourist satisfaction. Following the critical level, there are a few possible outcomes depending on how tourism has been managed. Butler (1980) indicates that from studying the life-cycle of a tourism destination, there is a potential for self-destruction signified by the outcome of the decline stage. The possibility of self-destruction stresses the need for tourism to be managed (the reactive approach) (Kian, 2009). Through the proactive approach with the sustainable management of a tourism destination, it could result in a higher critical range of elements of capacity and prevent self-destruction. Thus would sustain the level of tourist arrivals for a longer period of time. However the former is based on the assumption that some resources would be allocated for sustainable development, resulting in slower growth, but the pay-back will be in terms of higher carrying capacity (Kian, 2009). The second life cycle (Figure 3.2) illustrates the differences and the changes in the critical range of elements of capacity when sustainable development is practiced.



**Figure 3.2** Destination life cycle and sustainable development



Source: Adapted from Kian (2009).

It is at the stage of consolidation and stagnation in which the destination managers must intervene to avoid decline of tourists (UNWTO, 2007). The development of a model for the sustainable management of a tourism destination must be able to respond to the opportunities and challenges that tourism presents. Furthermore, engage in taking a proactive approach in managing the destination. It is important that the destination reaps the benefits of a sustained level of tourist arrivals rather than reach the stage of decline.

Theoretically, destination management needs to be practised in a way that enables the destination to delay or transform its life cycle (Knowles and Curtis, 1999; Longjit, 2010). As destination development can be seen in terms of tourist demand, tourism supply and tourism stakeholders (Butler, 1980; Pearce, 1989; Prideaux, 2000) these relationships create different phases of destination development. Therefore these would be significant to take into consideration for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Consequently, relate the development in context of tourism stakeholder demand for sustainable tourism destinations. Potentially, this could enable the destination to delay or transform its lifecycle. There is a gap in knowledge regarding the demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. This issue will be integrated to the theoretical framework to assess the sustainable management of a tourism destination which is presented at the end of the chapter.

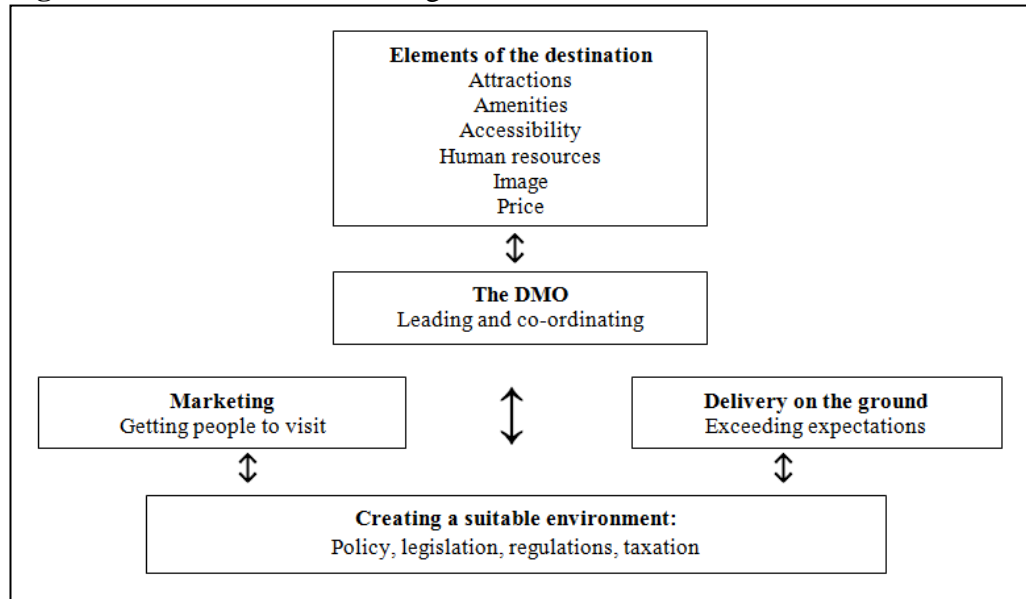
### **3.5 Destination management**

Destination management is a description used in a variety of ways that has yet to have a commonly agreed upon definition. The destination is the primary unit of management action (Timur, 2003; Ritchie, 2009; Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010; Fyall, 2011) in tourism. The future of tourism destinations are threatened without proper management (Jamieson and Noble, 2000). Destinations present complex challenges for management as they must serve a range of needs for the tourists, tourism related businesses, local businesses and industries (Howie, 2003). According to Longjit (2010), three major aspects of destination management appear in tourism literature. These are the provision of multiple tourism-related activities, the involvement of multiple agencies, and a desire to achieve common goals. This is reflective of the UNWTO (2007: 2):

Destination management calls for a coalition of many organisations and interests working towards a common goal.

The complexity of destination management is discussed through illustrative case studies and effective practical approaches for various facets of destination management. These provide a comprehensive view to planners, policymakers, and destination managers who attempt to ensure a sustainable future for communities in an innovative way (Tigu, 2012). The UNWTO (2007) developed a destination management diagram. This outlines that the coalition of organisations is required for the co-ordinated management of the elements that make up the destination (Figure 3.3). All of the elements that shape the tourism destination are influenced by the role of stakeholders attitudes and their willingness to co-operate (Fyall, Oakley, Weiss, 2000; de Araujo, Bramwell, 2002). Co-ordinated management will help avoid duplication of efforts in promotion, training support and services. In addition, management gaps that have not been addressed can be identified. This strategic approach of linking up various entities are for the better management of the destination (UNWTO, 2007). Destination management is summarised in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3** Destination management



Source: Adapted from UNWTO (2007).

As identified by the UNWTO in Figure 3.3, management of the elements of the destination should be led and co-ordinated by the various Destination Management Organisations (DMO). From this, marketing and delivery on the ground is carried out and a suitable environment is required to develop tourism in the destination (UNWTO, 2007). This is the foundation of destination management. Destination regulations contribute toward a suitable environment (Ramm, 2001; Tepelus and Cordoba, 2005). Destinations may need to be managed across political or administrative boundaries. The UNWTO suggests that the most favourable level for destination management in many countries is below the national level. It is usually carried out within the public sector boundaries as this is easier. It is important to note the UNWTO destination diagram has a slight flaw in failing to outline the destination boundary and the aspect of a common goal or objective, however such models are emerging and capable of being amended.

The tourism industry has its differences from other traditional industries regarding its processes such as design, logistics, production, promotion, sales and profits. The tourism industry has its positives from being unique with advantages for the wider community, employment opportunities, allowing businesses to gain from external expenditure and expenditure retaining in the destination. Yet, there are challenges as identified by the UNWTO (2007):

- Making partnership work
- Ensuring strong leadership

- Minimising economic leakages
- Planning to achieve competitive advantage
- Delivering quality

This thesis is concerned with examining the sustainable management of a tourism destination therefore it is important to be aware of the challenges involved. Furthermore, it was necessary to discuss destination management to recognise that it is a provision of multiple tourism-related activities, involves multiple agencies and how there is a desire to achieve common goals. Longjit (2010) indicated that the integration of all management features: destination managers, management structure, management purposes, management activities, and management resources is required in the practice of destination management. With this in mind, it is necessary to discuss the DMO who according to the UNWTO (2007) is to lead and co-ordinate destination management.

### **3.6 Destination Management Organisation**

The ability to perform the destination management role will be determined by the Destination Management Organisations (DMO) capacity to co-ordinate the stakeholders. The tourism sector is in a state of transition, rapidly evolving with the direct competition of destinations globally (Presenza, Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005). Thus, the components of the tourism system need to be managed effectively. As a result many destinations have created a DMO to provide leadership for the management of tourism (Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). The role of the DMO is to lead and co-ordinate activities under a coherent strategy (UNWTO, 2007). The leadership and co-ordination roles performed by a DMO are the essence of on-going, long term success (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). DMOs generally fall into the category of a National Tourism Authority, or regional, state or local DMO (UNWTO, 2004). The DMO has seen the inclusion of activities important to the success of tourism in a destination from a competitive and sustainable perspective (Presenza, Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005). It is suggested by Kasper (1995) that for political and structural reasons, the DMO is mainly concerned with promoting co-operation and the widest possible harmonisation of objectives within a destination.

Historically DMOs were viewed to have undertaken marketing activities. It remains yet in literature to be recognised as their principal purview (Gartrell, 1988; Dore and Crouch, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). Organisations who believe their efforts

should be dedicated to destination promotion and marketing alone may be more appropriately termed destination promotion organisations (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). However this view has since changed. The DMO is not only marketing and promotion, but also has a management role (UNWTO, 2004). The UNWTO (2004) portrays two possible roles for a DMO:

The organisations responsible for the management and/or marketing of destinations.

A DMO has seen a shift of marketing to management (Gretzel et al., 2006; Pike, 2008). There has been the transition of the 'M' in DMO to refer to management rather than marketing (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). After all, the marketing of a destination is inadequate if it has not been managed. The DMO responsible for the management of a destination needs to work towards a common vision (UNWTO, 2007). It should incorporate an integrated manner in destination management.

Due to the variations in the DMO roles, Presenza et al. (2005) suggested that DMO may be organised into two significant functions. These are External Destination Marketing (EDM) and Internal Destination Development (IDD). Each of the functions may be viewed as an amalgam of specific activities. IDD may be viewed as encompassing all forms of activity undertaken by the DMO (except that of marketing) to develop and maintain tourism in a destination. Many of the activities require the action and resources of other destination stakeholders. The most important aspects of IDD are said to be effectively achieved through the DMOs critical competency of co-ordinating tourism stakeholders.

The presence of a DMO that involves different stakeholders is required for planning and managing tourism and addressing its impacts (Heath, 2002; Page, 2003; TSG, 2007; UNWTO, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). Through securing the co-operation of various stakeholders, the DMO can mobilise the resources necessary to be effective. According to Presenza et al., (2005) the main competency of stakeholder co-ordination must effectively mobilise and deploy resources to achieve positive outcomes. Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) indicate DMOs have a wide range of stakeholders that have a high potential for co-operation but also some potential to threaten the ability of the DMO to achieve its objectives. For example, if interaction with local residents is not effectively managed, then they may become unfriendly toward visitors (Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie

and Sheehan, 2010). This is regarded as critical information to help understand DMOs as conveners that unite a much more diverse set of interests.

Stakeholders identify a relationship between the success of a destination and a DMO (Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). Managerial concern regarding the performance of DMOs is apparent (UNWTO, 2004; DMAI, 2005; Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). A destination should strive for a successful DMO (Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). Therefore, an important assessment of the DMO ability to foster IDD will be directly related to the number and quality of relationships with tourism destination stakeholders. As this thesis seeks to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination, it is important to integrate the DMO into the theoretical framework. In particular to identify if there is a DMO to lead and co-ordinate destination management and to examine DMO interactions with stakeholders. This leads to the discussion of the vision for a tourism destination.

### **3.7 Vision of a tourism destination**

A shared vision of the tourism destination's future is pivotal (Getz, 1994; Ritchie, 1993, 1999). This is a major aspect of destination management (UNWTO, 2007; Longjit, 2010). A vision for a destination is important as it demands a future perspective (Vogel and Swanson, 1988; Korac - Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1998; Cooper, 2002; Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Presenza, 2006; Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). No clear vision of sustainability is recognised as a sustainability blunder (Doppelt, 2010). The Australian Government (2004) developed ten steps to sustainable tourism which contribute to the process of destination management. They initially reviewed a combination of considerations or implementation issues within each step. The ten steps to sustainable tourism are as follows:

- Step 1 - What do we want to do?
- Step 2 - Who is, could be or needs to be involved?
- Step 3 - What is known?
- Step 4 - What makes this region, place or product special?
- Step 5 - What are the issues?
- Step 6 - Analysing issues
- Step 7 - Principles or objectives to guide action
- Step 8 - What are your ideas and options?
- Step 9 - How to do it?
- Step 10 - Statement of directions

Step one is to clearly define an aim to guide the work ahead. This can be in the form of a vision statement. It is recommended that it is tight, clear and achievable. Moreover, to consider the timeframes to work to and why it needs to be put in place (Australian Government, 2004). The vision defines the long term development of the destination (Ritchie, 1993), therefore it is essential to have an agreement of the timeframe (Cooper, 2002). The Australian Government's step nine of sustainable tourism provides a sample format that covers important implementation issues.

**Table 3.2** Step 9: How to do it?

What needs to be done? (proposed action or strategy)	Who should be responsible and involved?	What is the sequence and timing?	What resources are needed?	How will this action or strategy be monitored and evaluated?

Source: Australian Government (2004: 51).

For each proposed action or strategy as seen in Table 3.2, the actions on how to attain these should be listed. The steps indicate 'who should be responsible and involved.' A fundamental ingredient in sustainable development efforts is the need for collaboration (Sautter and Leisen, 1999). Particularly in the development of the vision as the development of a vision is most successful when developed with ideas from many people (Nutt and Backaff, 1997). As destination management happens through the co-operation amongst the stakeholders both the public and private sector, it is necessary to involve these stakeholders in the development of a shared vision. However it may be challenging to find common ground among the various agendas of the stakeholders (Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). The common ground should represent some level of mutual agreement between all related agencies for the benefits of their agencies and related stakeholders (Longjit, 2010). The stakeholders need to create a "common issue of concern" which then leads to a common vision (ETE and UNESCO, 2007). Surveys, meetings and votes may be used to create a vision amongst stakeholders (ETE and UNESCO, 2007). A shared vision is vital for direction setting, however Schianetz et al. (2007) highlight the need for it to be complemented by concrete strategies and measurable goals in order to maintain the commitment of the stakeholders.

The Australian Government (2004) indicates the need for a time frame; three to five years is typical. A major evaluation and review should be conducted at the end of this

time. This could lead to the plan being refreshed or the process being repeated to produce a new plan. A system to determine how to measure progress toward the vision is needed (Giró, 2002; Cox, Saucier, Cusick, Richins, McClure, 2009). The Australian Government highlight how the action or strategy is to be monitored and evaluated. This would be vital in the development of the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Rio and Nunes (2012) indicated that monitoring and evaluation of the impact of tourism on a tourism destination is indispensable to guarantee the long-term sustainability of a destination. The aspect of a common goal, objective or vision for destination management has been reiterated. It is important to embed this aspect to the theoretical framework to assess the sustainable management of a tourism destination. It is also important to examine if the vision has a specific timeframe. For the implementation of a destinations vision, it must be decided by whom it shall be directed and implemented. The sustainable management of a tourism destination also needs to be directed and implemented, this may be conducted by a destination manager.

### **3.8 Destination manager**

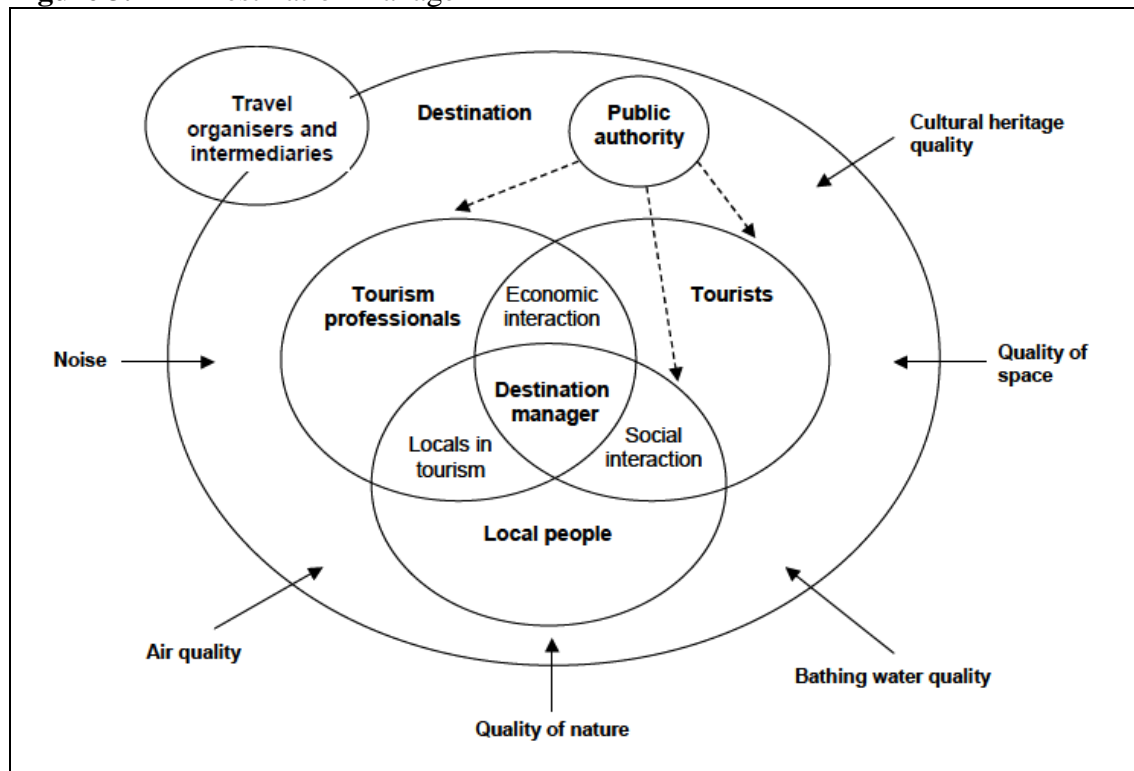
Destinations that are professionally managed appear to be more successful compared to others (Laesser and Beritelli, 2013). Destination competitiveness depends on the human factor for destination leadership (Laesser and Beritelli, 2013; Pechlaner and Volgger, 2013). A destination manager is required in the practice of destination management (Longjit, 2010). Without a destination manager, there is less chance of a coherent set of goals and objectives (Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). Therefore for the management of a tourism destination, ideally a destination manager should be appointed.

A destination manager is employed in an increasing number of destinations (Howie, 2003; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008; Edwards and Griffin, 2013). However, the 'powers' that go with the destination manager role are largely ones of influence and persuasion rather than authority (Howie, 2003). A key to cultural change toward sustainability is leadership (Doppelt, 2010). A sustainability focus requires destination managers to foster a 'spaceship culture' within the industry rather than a 'cowboy culture' (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman and Scott, 2009).



The European Communities (2003) developed a useful destination manager diagram. The diagram represents the destination and illustrates the relationship of a destination manager to the various destination stakeholders. It also demonstrates the multiple quality aspects that influence the destination (Figure 3.4). The quality flows that can affect the quality of tourism are evident on the outside of the destination circle. The travel organisers and intermediaries are in a circle of their own as they are often represented in the destination and may take an active part in the management process. The diagram indicates that the manager is the midpoint of the “human” components, the tourists, locals and tourism professionals. There are flows and interactions between each of these in which the manager is an anchor point. The independent circle, public authority stands alone as it is often present within the other three. Considering its presence within the other three, this suggests that it may be beneficial that the destination manager be established from a public authority.

**Figure 3.4** Destination manager



Source: European Communities (2003).

The diagram (Figure 3.4) indicates that the destination manager is to bring together the destination stakeholders and facilitate a constructive process whereby their inputs on the quality of tourism in the destination may be gathered. A destination manager is typically from a local authority (Enterprise DG Publication, 2003). As local authorities have the

resources necessary to take an active role in the planning of tourism, they often function as the catalyst for change. Kruger and Meintjies (2008) indicated that funding is required for the preparation of tourism plans, detailed planning of tourism development areas, planning and feasibility analyses of specific development projects. However, Pruijs (2008) stated that developing a reliable funding base may prove a challenge.

A lack of knowledge is a challenge often encountered in trying to move towards sustainable tourism (Salima Sulaiman, 1996; Wilkinson, 1997; Carlsen et al., 2001; Font and Buckley, 2001; Font, 2002; Vernon et al., 2003; Dodds, 2007; Thwaites, 2007; Graci, 2009; Graci, 2010; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). Further challenges are that of high costs, the right skills, expertise and time (Salima Sulaiman, 1996; Wilkinson, 1997; Graci and Dodds, 2010). Research conducted in Australia indicated how tourism officers were challenged to do more with less funding, they were challenged to find innovative ways of achieving results (Carson, Beattie and Gove, 2003; Dredge, 2003). However in the appointment of a destination manager for the sustainable management of a tourism destination, it would be beneficial if they were to focus solely on their designated responsibility. Therefore in context of tourism in Ireland, appointing a destination manager from a local authority would allow for access to the necessary resources to take an active role in the planning of tourism. Therefore, destination manager is an essential aspect to embed in the theoretical framework to examine the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare. The destination manager role leads to the discussion on the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

### **3.9 Sustainable management of tourism destinations**

The concept of sustainable management as it is applied to a tourism destination is increasingly being discussed in theory. One of the first terms related to the sustainable management of tourism was sustainable tourism destinations. This term emerged from the need to develop tourism destinations in a sustainable manner (Lee, 2001). Three main components to the definition of sustainable tourism destinations are sustainable development, tourism and destinations. The following are the main elements the definition depends upon according to Lee (2001):

- Definition of boundaries of tourism destinations
- Scope of sustainable tourism destinations

- Definition and strictness of sustainable development

Theory on sustainable tourism destinations has since progressed to not only discuss the sustainable development of the destination but now includes the sustainable management, otherwise referred to as sustainable tourism destination management by Jamieson and Noble (2000). Jamieson and Noble indicate stakeholders have a common objective, to preserve the resources that make a destination unique and appeal to the tourists:

Sustainable tourism destination management sees destinations as more than a sum of their parts and seeks to create destinations that are healthy and viable in the long term for tourists and residents alike.

The impact of a well-managed tourism destination can provide important benefits. Poor management of a destination can have a serious impact on the ecosystems and contribute to the loss of cultural integrity and identity of the destination (Charters and Saxon, 2007; Rio and Nunes, 2012). From the sustainable and integrated view of destination management, according to Jamieson and Noble (2000) this serves to:

- Address the needs of tourists and the economic interests of the tourism industry.
- Approach tourism development in a way which reduces the negative impacts.
- Protect local people's business interests, heritage and environment.
- Protect the local environment in part because it is the livelihood of the destination.

It is important to identify the benefits of a sustainable and integrated view of destination management as destination management should be practised in an integrated fashion.

Welford and Ytterhus (2004) indicated that to move towards a type of tourism consistent with sustainable tourism, it is argued that we need to see enhanced management of a destination. Management of a destination consistent with sustainable tourism has been referred to in several ways over the years. For example moving destinations towards sustainable tourism (Welford and Ytterhus, 2004), sustainable tourism destination management (Jamieson and Noble, 2000), on sustainable tourism management (Griffin, Flanagan and Fitzgerald, 2012). The most recent terms are sustainable management at destination level (EC, 2013) and sustainable destination management (Dredge and Jamal, 2013). As a point has been reached where the debate over the theory of sustainable tourism is delaying the more important aspect of putting it into practice (Garrod and Fyall, 1998; Torres-Delgado and Palomeque, 2012) this

research specifically refers to this form of management as the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

This research has established a comprehensive definition for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The definition has been developed according to the researchers understanding of various concepts identified in the literature of sustainability and tourism. Furthermore it has integrated aspects of the UNWTO (2004) and Costa Rican Tourism Institute definition of sustainable tourism (ICT, 2005).

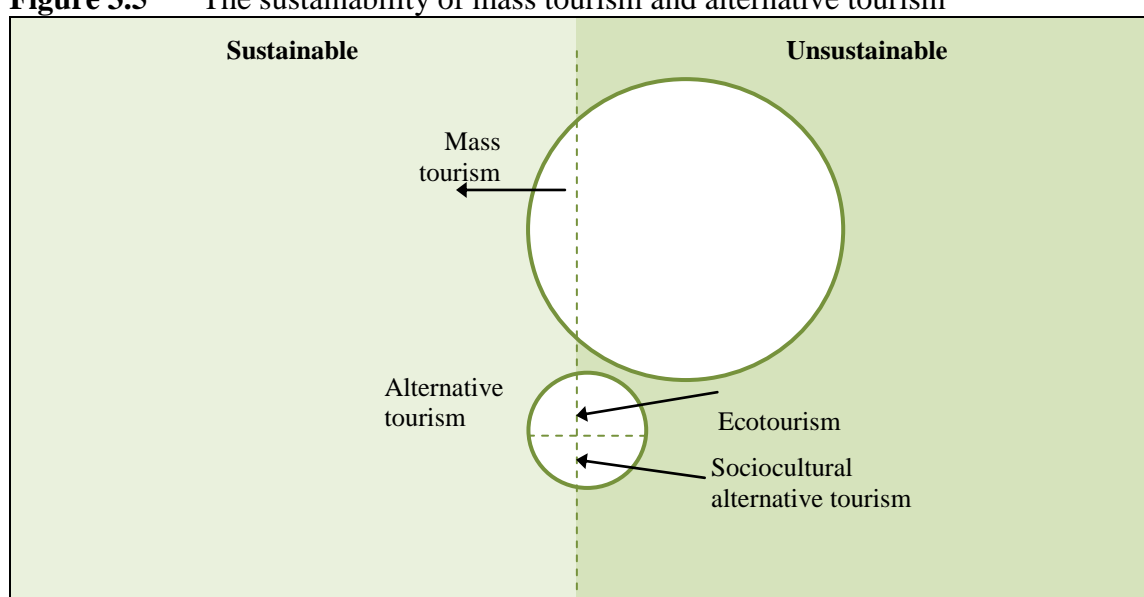
The sustainable management of a tourism destination refers to the management of the environment, economic, social and cultural heritage aspects of tourism in a way that is appropriate to the tourists, the destination as it has been defined, the environment and the host population. The sustainable management of a tourism destination requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, an appointed destination manager as well as strong political leadership working towards a shared vision to ensure wide participation and consensus building. This is a continuous process which contributes to other programs of national development that requires constant monitoring.

This researcher considered it necessary to integrate the sustainable management of a tourism destination with other contributions to programs of national development. After all, sustainable management of a tourism destination will make an impact upon agriculture, food, the environment, education, jobs and enterprise to name a few. A driver for tourism stakeholders to implement sustainable management was due to the expected growth in tourist numbers (Dolnicara and Leisch, 2008) and the demand from conscientious consumers (SNV, 2009). However the demand for sustainable tourism destinations is unknown. This research seeks to establish baseline findings on the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. If a demand for sustainable tourism destinations is identified, this will convey the need for the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

For the sustainable management of a tourism destination it is important to discuss the realisation that sustainability does not necessarily equate with scale (Opperman and Weaver, 2000). Regarding mass tourism, it is more commonly recognised to be a negative force in a destination however can be positive. It depends on the circumstances

pertaining to the location, likewise for alternative tourism. Figure 3.5 summarises in a general way, the relationship between scale and sustainability. Tourism scholars like Butler (1999) and Wall (1997) argue that even mass tourism can be sustainable and alternative tourism can be unsustainable. Implying that, sustainable issues are more relevant and presumably more realistic at smaller scales. However this position was then replaced by the understanding that sustainability is the goal to be achieved rather than a type of tourism product. In addition, sustainability might be a practical concept even at mass tourism scale (Lu and Nepal, 2009). Hence, the focus of tourism research on sustainable tourism has moved towards the goal of becoming sustainable.

**Figure 3.5** The sustainability of mass tourism and alternative tourism



Source: Adapted from (Weaver, 1998; Weaver and Opperman, 2000).

The diagram contends that most mass tourism is operating in an unsustainable way yet substantial progress is being made in the direction of sustainability. This has been shifting over time. The alternative tourism sector appears to be primarily sustainable, the dotted horizontal line indicates the distinction between the components of ecotourism and sociocultural/alternative tourism is often fuzzy. The ideal as highlighted by Weaver and Opperman (2000) is that both sectors will eventually situate on the sustainable side. However, sustainable development may be considered as an ideal and “moving” goal that may never be achieved due to the constant change within the system (Lee, 2001). Graci and Dodds (2010) are in agreement as they recognise sustainability to be a global ideal rather than a local. Furthermore, that tourism can never be fully sustainable but can move towards achieving it. Lu and Nepal (2009) indicate the most

recent position is one of convergence which suggests that sustainability is a goal which is applicable to all forms of tourism regardless of scale. Hardy and Beeton (2001) had maintained that sustainability is attainable at local, regional and global scales. This could be particularly difficult to achieve through practical implementation. As highlighted by Lee (1999) unless 100% of the stakeholders are committed, this is intricate as all their interests differ.

It was outlined that sustainable development is a long term goal for which short-term and medium term targets should be set (Lee, 2001). When the destination has reached the long term goals of sustainable development, it is at that point it may be considered a sustainable tourism destination. However, as recognised by Lee (1999) the problems in reaching this stage may lie with the stakeholders. Lu and Nepal (2009) also highlight that any of the stakeholder groups may not have full confidence in tourism, and this will increase divisions between the competing interests. As a result, it is to the sustainable end that tourism planning and management efforts should be directed. Therefore the model to be developed from this research is appropriate in its approach as it aims for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

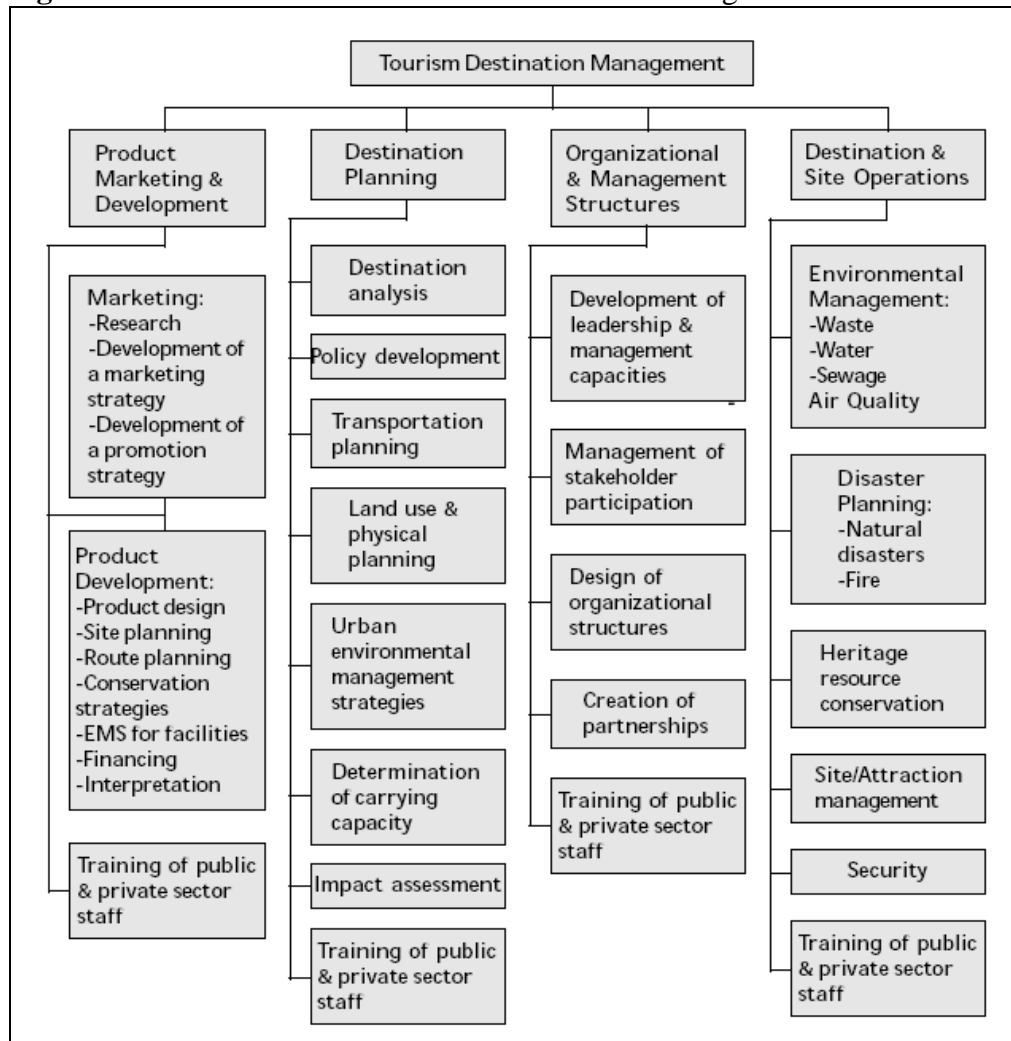
### **3.10 Factors involved in the sustainable management of tourism destinations**

There are challenges to be encountered with the various factors involved in the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Jamieson (2006) refers to this topic as sustainable tourism destination management. Jamieson highlights that for this process to occur there should be a destination capable of developing products to meet market demand. This strengthens the need to determine the holidaymaker and tourism demand for sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. Therefore the tourism industry may develop the destination according to market demands.

The factors involved in the sustainable management of a tourism destination as outlined in Jamiesons model are product marketing and development, destination planning, organisational and management structures, destination and site operations (Figure 3.6). The appropriate co-ordination and management of product marketing and development is required for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Product development must be carefully co-ordinated (Inskeep, 1993; Laws, 1995). A number of authors indicated DMOs take a leadership role in product development (Pearce et al.,

1998; Spyriadis, Fletcher, Fyall and Carter, 2009). In order to enhance tourism product development, the Australian Government (2004) indicated the need to recognise and protect the values of our special natural and cultural places. Tourism product development should follow the key principles of sustainable tourism development (UNWTO and ETC, 2011). In Ireland the importance of product development was recognised as the state invested a significant amount for product development over the period of the NDP 2007-13 (Failte Ireland, 2007).

**Figure 3.6** Factors involved in the sustainable management of a tourism destination



Source: Adapted from Jamieson (2006: 5).

Destination planning is vital, it is made difficult by the variety of stakeholders that can affect a destinations future (Jamieson, 2006). Many approaches can be taken for planning, the process is described by Jamieson (2006) as dynamic, participative, and adaptable to the needs and concerns of the destinations many stakeholders. Cooperative and proactive direction is needed to guide planning and development. However

regarding sustainability, a strategic planning approach is essential. A leading advocate of this approach to tourism planning has argued that: 'the concept of planning has shifted from making a plan (noun), to planning (verb)' (Gunn, 1988). The significant difference indicated by Laws (1995) is that strategic planning entails recognition of the complexity of change processes. This may be co-ordinated effectively through the help of an organisation and management structure.

A clearly defined organisation and management structure will provide the individual stakeholders to establish better co-operation and co-ordination of activities (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Wang and Xiang, 2007; Formica and Kothari, 2008; Pansiri, 2008; Wang, 2008; Haugland et al., 2011). Establishing it correctly is often key to success (Jamieson, 2006). It is indicated that each situation requires a distinct organisational structure yet the importance of stakeholder involvement cannot be emphasised enough. Simplicity of structure is desirable (Lennon, Smith, Cockerell and Trew, 2006). The simpler the structure, the less likely it is to fail (Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). A clearly defined destination management structure can provide destination managers and stakeholders with a place to negotiate the sustainable management of the destination (Sustainable Tourism Online, 2010). Furthermore, it may provide transparency as to who is responsible for managing the destination and site operations.

Destination and site operations are specific to the management of the environment and core resources. This includes aspects such as disaster planning, heritage resource conservation and security. Indeed the training of public and private sector staff is essential for each of the areas for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Jamieson outlined the evident shift from the standard management of tourism to taking into consideration an integrated and more so thinking globally method.

In Jamieson's model the fundamental aspects of a DMO, a destination manager and a time specific vision were not indicated. It may be beneficial to have these outlined for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The majority of factors outlined in Jamieson's model are important to be embedded into the theoretical framework to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination.



### **3.11 Tourism planning**

Tourism planning may be beneficial to approach the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The tourism literature contains a widespread discussion of sustainability. However there has been little connection to sustainability issues or approaches in tourism planning models (Moscardo, 2011). Planning by the local authorities is necessary to consider the interaction between impacts (Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington, 2007). Consequently, it is emphasised by Koeman et al. (2002) that:

Travel and tourism destinations are an appropriate scale for considering sustainable tourism management, planning and development.

For the purpose of this research and the development of the research model, it is necessary to have a connection to both tourism planning and sustainability issues with an ideological commitment approach conforming to Hall's (1970) definition:

Planning is concerned with anticipating and regulating change in a system to promote orderly development so as to increase social, economic and environmental benefits. Planning is an ordered sequence of operations.

At this early stage in 1970 it was recognised the need to have orderly development of the social, economic and environmental benefits. Gunn spoke of how these could be obtained in 1988:

Planning as a concept of viewing the future and dealing with anticipated consequences is the only way that tourism's advantages can be obtained.

Therefore, fundamental to strategic planning is a vision of what the future should be in order to define the appropriate steps for action as well as a strategy to enable a destination to achieve the vision (Laws, 1995). A review of more than 150 tourism planning models was conducted by Getz (1986). The review concluded with a list of problems associated with the approach to tourism planning that the models reflected:

- A narrow focus on project or specific development planning;
- Limited analysis and evaluation of all tourism benefits and costs;
- A lack of attention paid to non-economic factors; and
- The need to integrate tourism into other development processes.

Getz's made suggestions for moving forward by integrating aspects from the third and fourth traditions of tourism planning as identified by (Hall, 2005).

- **Boosterism** – tourism is a good use of cultural and physical resources.
- **Economic** – tourism can be used like other industries to generate revenue and employment.

- Physical/spatial – tourism can be controlled through a consideration of its spatial and environmental features.
- Community – need for local control and balanced development.
- Sustainability – integration of social, economic and environmental aspects into planning systems.

Even though there was a significant gap from Getz's (1986) review to Hall's (2005) work, it is suggested that little changed in practice, with many tourism plans still embedded in the boosterism or economic approaches. However the integration of sustainability was one of the suggestions made by Hall. To make tourism more sustainable, the impacts and needs of tourism have to be taken into account in its planning (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005). Therefore the development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations may be more effective if mapped upon a planning process. It is important for this process not to reflect the problems identified by Getz (1986) and to appropriately address the approaches outlined by Hall (2005). Therefore, we need to identify the most common elements or steps that are necessary for inclusion.

There is an abundance of tourism and destination planning process, approaches, models and frameworks. These are located in tourism texts and planning guidelines prepared by tourism academics and agencies involved in tourism. This research conducted a review of tourism planning figures and models ranging from 1985 to 2012:

- Basic Stages in Tourism Planning (Acerenza, 1985).
- Process for Preparing the Comprehensive Tourism Development Plan at the National and Regional levels (Inskeep, 1991).
- Preparing a Tourism Plan (Pearce, Morrison and Rutledge, 1998).
- Destination Management Planning (Tourism Queensland, 2008).
- Model for strategic planning and managing tourism destinations (Ladeiras, Mota and Costa, 2010).
- Destination Planning and Management Framework (Jenkins, Dredge and Taplin, 2011).
- The Sustainable Destination and Site Planning Process (Rieder, 2012).

Various types of model presentation were identified. Those which formed as visual imagery such as linear flow charts with steps summarised in boxes, a unidirectional process and a cyclical presentation were one. There was also a set of text statements setting the steps in the planning process as a series of separate points. Moscardo (2011) reviewed 36 tourism planning models from the early 1970s to 2008. Moscardo identified that many models have no clear historical progression as these are recycled

into other texts and planning guidelines. It was identified that the complexity of planning processes varies greatly from a range of 3–36 steps or elements. The majority had between five and eleven elements and there was a substantial commonality in these elements.

**Table 3.3** Summary of common steps in tourism planning models

Establishing goals/vision/objectives/Problems	
Situation appraisal/analysis/research/inventory	
Stakeholder input/consultation	Development of strategies/plans/policies
Implementation/action	
Evaluation/monitoring/refinement	

Source: Moscardo (2011).

The researcher's review of planning processes recognised the same common steps in tourism planning models as identified by Moscardo (2011). These are presented in the most commonly occurring order (Table 3.3). Interesting concluding comments were made by Moscardo from the analysis of the 36 tourism planning processes. It was concluded that destination residents have only a limited role in the planning process. The majority focus goals related to visitor numbers, income or specific business development opportunities. Ten of the models include studies to determine and predict tourist demand. There were 13 which include a step specifically on market analysis, six discuss determining and meeting tourist needs in detail. Marketing was a core strategy of 13 of the planning processes. The most common words used in conjunction with tourists were demand, needs, satisfaction and support. The most common words used in conjunction with destination residents were engagement, consultation, willingness and goals. Interestingly, almost half of the models (17) do not specify who is responsible for the tourism planning process. The remainder allocate responsibility to governments in general or some sort of planning or steering committee, a tourism office or marketing organisation, local government, and the private sector.

An argument reinforced throughout the literature is that the quality of community life can be enhanced by orientating tourism planning towards resolving probable conflicts, mitigating negative impacts and moving towards desirable alternatives while allowing planners to integrate tourism and gain acceptance by the majority of the community through participation (Murphy, 1985; Ritchie, 1988; Simmons, 1994; Pearce, Moscardo and Ross, 1996; Hanrahan, 2008). The argument is supported by Tosun (2000: 615) who states:

It is believed that a participatory development approach would facilitate implementation of principles of sustainable tourism development by creating better opportunities for local people to gain larger and more balanced benefits from tourism development taking place in their localities.

Public participation is evidently seen as a method to improve the image and professional basis of tourism management and planning (Pearce, Moscardo and Ross, 1996; Tosun, 2004). It respects and meets the needs of the host community (Murphy, 1995; Tosun 1998). The shift towards participation has evolved in recent years with the 1990's seen as the decade of participatory development. Once a marginal activity has become mainstreamed in the work of many tourism organisations as argued by Henkel and Stirrat (2001: 168):

it is now difficult to find a development project that does not claim to adopt a “participatory” approach involving “bottom up” planning, acknowledging the importance of “indigenous” knowledge and claiming to “empower” local people.

Coupled with this, according to Survival International (1996) it in fact became fashionable for conservationists to talk about “consulting” the local people. This happened following Local Agenda (LA) 21, through the evolution and development of LA 21, participation became part of the apparatus of development. It had been argued by Murphy in the early 1980's that if tourism makes use of a communities resources then the community should be a key player in the process of planning (Hanrahan, 2008).

This review of tourism planning has informed a beneficial approach to be taken in the development of the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The research has identified the need for a model that incorporates a tourism planning process. Bearing in mind the common steps identified from the review of a substantial number of tourism planning models, it is important to map upon these. Tourism planning should strive for a balance between demand and supply (UNESCAP, 2003). Therefore, establishing the demand for sustainable tourism destinations prior to developing the destination policy and planning is important.

### **3.12 Destination policy and planning**

Destination policy and planning was identified as one of the common steps in the review of the tourism planning processes. Destinations and their management are best set within the context of tourism policy and planning (Cooper et al., 2008). Presenza (2006) indicated that it uses information and judgement to make macro-level decisions

regarding the kind of destination that stakeholders want. According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003) tourism policy is poorly understood in the industry. Tourism policy must focus on macro level policies. It is long term in orientation and concentrates on how critical and limited resources can best respond to the perceived needs and opportunities in a changing environment. Tourism policy sets out the activities and behaviours that are acceptable and provides guidance for the stakeholders within a destination. It is said to define the so called 'rules of the game'. Tourism policy allows tourism to interface with other industrial sectors within the wider economy. In addition, link with national and regional economic and spatial strategies and the integrated national and regional strategies (Cooper et al., 2008).

The use of policies and regulations aimed specifically at controlling the demand and supply relationship at a destination accurately demonstrates the role that policy must play in the transformation towards more sustainable tourism development (Welford and Ytterhus, 2004). However, policies are difficult to implement because they depend on the tour operators attracting tourists who are willing to accept the forms of tourism desired by destination managers (Laws, 1995). Therefore, strategic planning and sound management are crucial in achieving sustainable development goals (Jamieson and Noble, 2000). In addition, Liu (2003) indicated that there is a need to develop policies and measures that are not only theoretically sound but also practically feasible. Destination policy and planning seeks to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of a destination (Presenza, 2006). This critical component will be integrated to the theoretical framework to assess the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

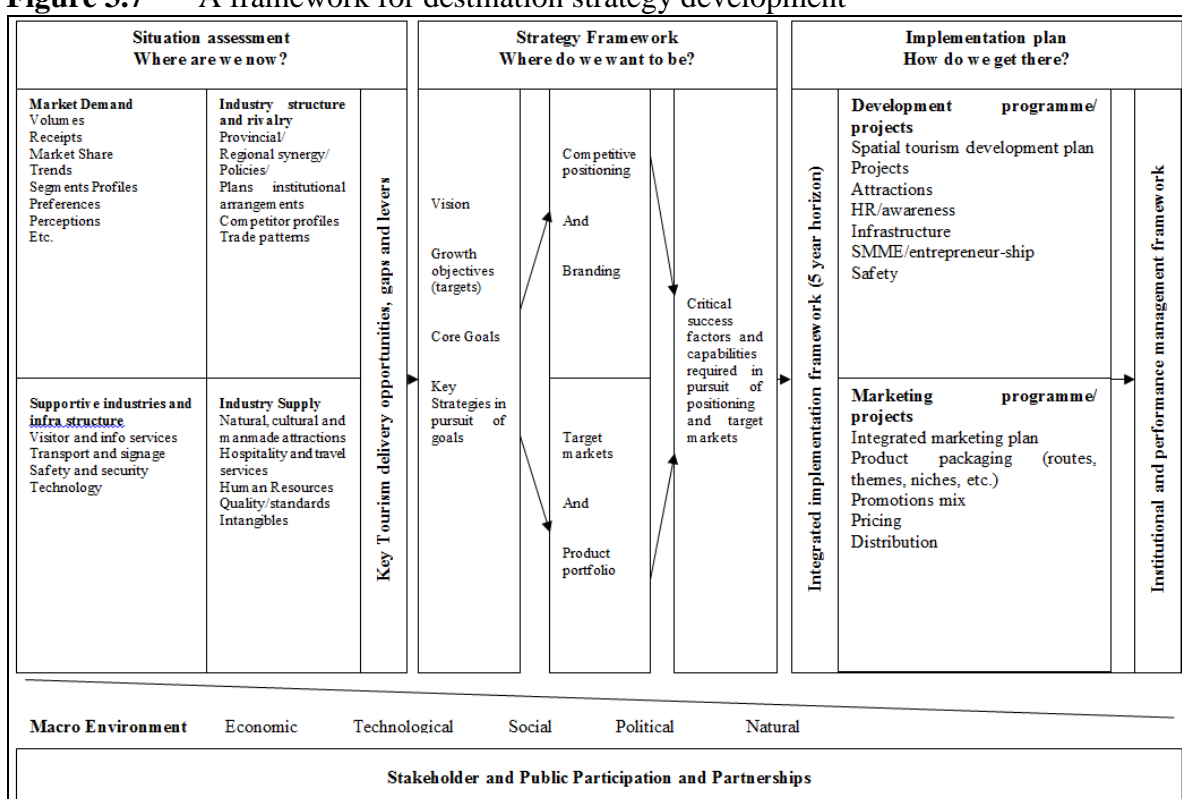
### **3.13 Destination strategy development**

Ideally, a tourism destination would benefit from a destination strategy to effectively carry out the management of the destination. The UNWTO (2007) developed a systems framework for destination strategy development (Figure 3.7). The framework summarises the strategic planning model that could be used for devising a strategy for the effective management of a destination. The first section, situation assessment is to establish where the destination stands regarding the destinations competitiveness. This includes a macro environment appraisal of the opportunities and threats that need to be taken into account when planning for tourism in the destination. A market analysis assessment and audit is to be carried out on the various components indicated in the

framework. Based upon these a summarised assessment is carried out of the key tourism challenges, delivery gaps, opportunities and levers for tourism growth.

Second component of the strategic framework is built upon the situation analysis of where the destination would like to be for future tourism growth. This includes a vision, objectives, targets and strategies to achieve the goals. The marketing component has the inclusion of a distinctive positioning and branding strategy to differentiate the destination from competitor destinations. Recurrent in this stage is an assessment based upon the critical success factors and destination capabilities required in the support of the positioning strategy and target markets.

**Figure 3.7** A framework for destination strategy development



Source: Adapted from UNWTO (2007: 24).

The third component is an integrated multi-year implementation plan. For the purpose of how the destination gets to where it wants to be. In comparison to other destination management plans, this is time specific with a five year horizon. The final part is an institutional and performance management framework, how do they organise themselves to get to the desired stage and how is the success measured? The UNWTO indicates that it is during this stage the impact of the strategy would have to be evaluated. In doing so, it would cover a number of different factors depending on the

priorities of the strategy. Various aspects of the UNWTO framework are reflected within Fáilte Ireland's (2012) five step plan to develop localities.

**Table 3.4** Develop your locality

<p><b>Step 1: Establish a destination development group</b></p> <p>1.1 Identify key stakeholders in the destination area</p> <p>1.2 Review plans and strategies</p> <p>1.3 Meet key stakeholders and establish partnerships</p> <p>1.4 Build trust, credibility and understanding of the value of a destination plan</p> <p><b>Step 2: Understand your destination and your visitors</b></p> <p>2.1 Define what the destination has to offer</p> <p>2.2 Consider how the destination is currently performing</p> <p>2.3 Identify what the visitor wants</p> <p>2.4 Look at your competitors, best practice and trends</p> <p>2.5 Identify the lifecycle stage of the destination</p> <p>2.6 Refine the destination proposition</p>	<p><b>Step 3: Developing the vision and strategy</b></p> <p>3.1 Agree the structure of the destination plan</p> <p>3.2 Agree a shared vision</p> <p><b>Step 4: Writing the destination plan</b></p> <p>4.1 Write the destination plan</p> <p>4.2 Identify resources and timescales</p> <p>4.3 Set targets</p> <p><b>Step 5: Implement the plan and monitor success</b></p> <p>5.1 Implement the plan</p> <p>5.2 Monitor and measure success</p>
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Source: Adapted from Fáilte Ireland (2012a).

The steps outlined by Fáilte Ireland were suggested for use by tourism businesses working together to develop a destination plan. This may be used to link local products and create an image, vision and brand for their area. Steps which reflect the components of the UNWTO framework is stakeholder involvement, understand your visitors, reflect the market analysis and to have a vision. For the five step plan, it is suggested to work with local partners in order to capitalise on the special qualities of the locality as a tourism destination. As a result, it will help everyone ensure they offer a quality experience to visitors (Fáilte Ireland, 2012a). These practical steps may also be related to the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

The components of the UNWTO framework and Fáilte Ireland steps have integrated many of the reiterated aspects for tourism destination management. The significance of an initial assessment, need for a vision, an implementation plan with a time specific period has been outlined. Furthermore, the importance of the macro environment, stakeholder, public participation and partnerships has been emphasised. However a fundamental aspect which has not been addressed is who will undertake the role to oversee the implementation of these frameworks and plans. It would be beneficial to have this outlined.

### 3.14 Destination competitiveness

Destination management is often discussed in the context of competitiveness. After all, destinations compete with each other, they need to develop competitive advantages in order to survive in the future (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth, Aarstad, 2011). However, it

would be ideal if tourism destinations were developed and managed in a sustainable and competitive manner (Longjit, 2010). It was declared by Ritchie and Crouch (2003: 9) that 'competitiveness without sustainability is illusory'. Therefore, both are essential and mutually supportive. These are two primary parameters that must be satisfied if the destination is to be successful. From the literature of Ritchie and Crouch (2003), the competitiveness of a destination refers to its ability to:

Compete effectively and profitably in the tourism marketplace; that is, to attract visitors in a way that enhances the prosperity and overall well-being of a destination.

Whereas sustainability pertains to the ability of a destination to:

Maintain the quality of its physical, social, cultural and environmental resources, while it competes in the marketplace (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003: 151).

A concern from the literature is to avoid the false appearance of economic profitability; profitability derived from the invisible depletion of the destinations natural capital. Conversely, it is indicated that sustainability may be viewed as encouraging 'natural capital investment'. For instance, programs that attempt to enhance different aspects of the national environment while refraining from current consumption in order to restore capital stocks (renewable), therefore ensure the availability of resources for future consumption (Prugh et al., 1995). With this perspective, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) indicate that successful tourism destination management involves traditional economic and business management skills balanced with environmental management capabilities (Table 3.5). The economic and business skills required are related to effective resource deployment and development. As seen in Table 3.5, this includes strategic planning for destination development, the marketing of the destination, the human resource management necessary to deliver quality visitor experiences, the financial management of resources and investment needed to support development. Finally, the organisation's management is required to develop the capacity to co-ordinate and ensure the delivery of essential services.



**Table 3.5** Some elements of successful ‘total tourism destination management’

<b>COMPETITIVENESS</b> ( <i>Resource Deployment</i> )	<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b> ( <i>Resource Stewardship</i> )
Business/Economic Management skills	Environmental management capabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Financial management</li> <li>• Operations management</li> <li>• Human resources management</li> <li>• Information management</li> <li>• Organisation management</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality management</li> <li>• Air quality management</li> <li>• Wildlife management</li> <li>• Forest/plant management</li> <li>• Habitat management</li> <li>• Visitor management</li> <li>• Biodiversity management</li> <li>• Resident/community management</li> <li>• Commemorative integrity</li> </ul>
<b>Information Management</b>	
<b>Destination Monitoring</b>	<b>Destination Research</b>

Source: Adapted from Ritchie and Crouch (2003: 152).

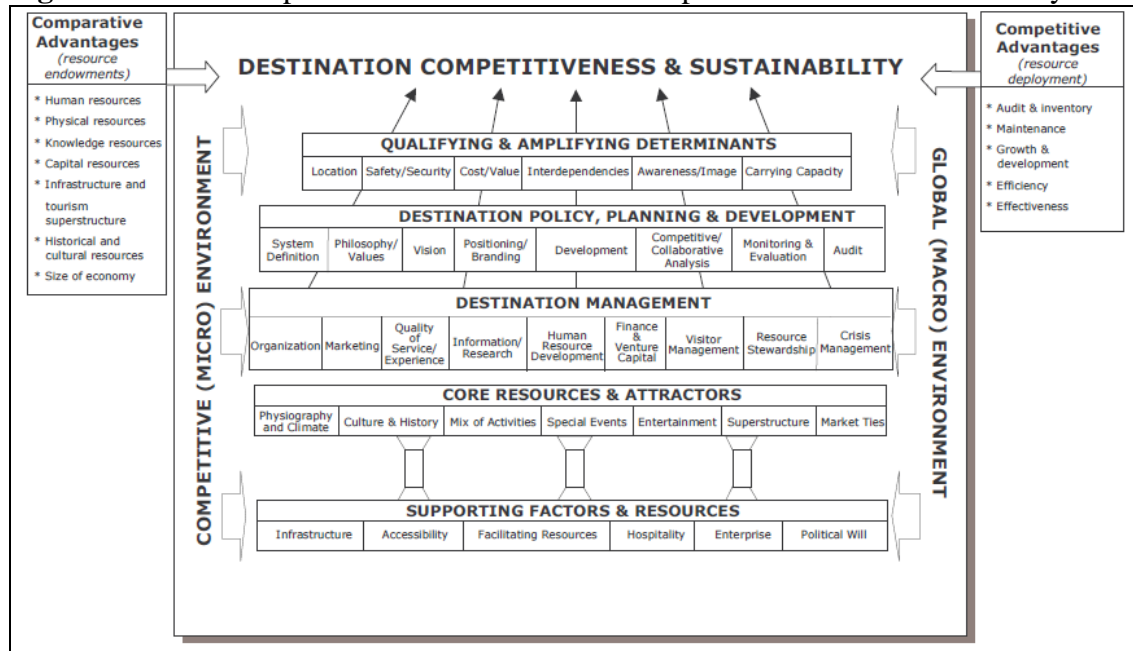
The environmental management capabilities are those critical for effective destination stewardship. However the concept of stewardship has expanded to encompass management practices that are designed to enhance and maintain the commemorative, social and cultural integrity of the destination. Furthermore, involve the ability to effectively manage the human presence within the boundaries of the destination.

In addition to Ritchie and Crouch’s elements of successful total tourism destination management, it is important to discuss the general conceptual model of destination competitiveness and sustainability (Figure 3.8). Firstly, they indicate a conceptual model is a device that provides a useful way of thinking about a complex issue. Further explained by Neuman (1994) as a collection of concepts that together forms a ‘web of meaning’. In this case it helps to clarify the understanding of the factors which affect the competitiveness of a tourism destination. It is important to bear in mind that models are not to be used to make a decision, they however assist in identifying which elements will be incorporated into the concept of the proposed model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

The conceptual model of destination competitiveness and sustainability (Figure 3.8) incorporates factors and sub factors each that have unique circumstances which vary depending on the destination. Ritchie and Crouch indicate how it is clear that each set of circumstances are dynamic, meaning changes over time in the global (macro) environment and competitive (micro) environment result in changing fortunes and challenges. For this reason, it is believed that a general model of destination

competitiveness could play an important role in guiding destination managers as they seek to diagnose their competitive problems and develop sustainable solutions.

**Figure 3.8** Conceptual model of destination competitiveness and sustainability



Source: Ritchie and Crouch (2003: 63).

The tourism system is open and subject to many influences and pressures that arise outside the system itself, this is the global (macro) environment. As it is in a constant state of change, destination managers need to regularly monitor the environment (Ritchie and Crouch, 2010). Events in one part of the world can produce consequences for tourism destinations in an entirely different region (Crouch, 2006). It is important to consider the impact of the macro environment on the industry as well as the destination (Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). Many destination managers consider the global forces as irrelevant to their responsibilities (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). The micro environment occupies their attention because of its close proximity and its implications for the destination's ability to serve the tourists and remain competitive (Riche and Crouch, 2003). Figure 3.8 as a conceptual model shows a significant number of factors to remind the destination managers or local authorities of the various aspects that must be considered in decision making. Many of these aspects have been discussed indirectly within this chapter.

This model of destination competitiveness and sustainability (Figure 3.8) arose from several research activities over a period of eight years. It is comprehensive however it

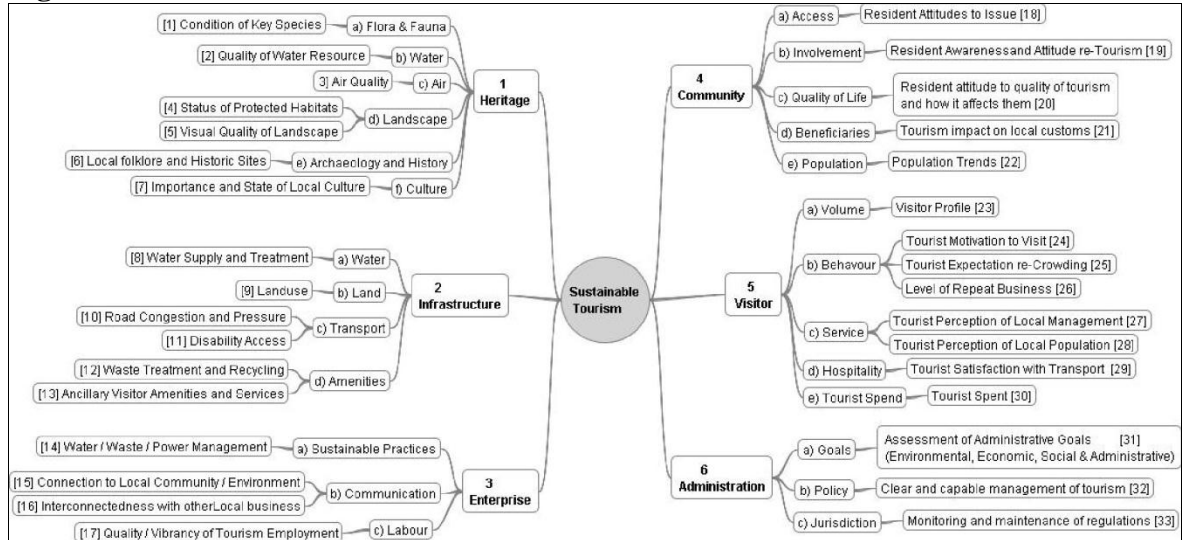
may benefit if it was provided with guidelines that lead to the understanding of how it should be practically applied and by whom it should be implemented. Nevertheless, in order to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination, it may be beneficial to incorporate those aspects specific to destination competitiveness and sustainability. Ritchie and Crouch's elements of successful total tourism destination management and the components of the model will be integrated to this study's theoretical framework to assess the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

### **3.15 Models of sustainable tourism specific to Ireland**

No model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations exists in Ireland. However there is one model of sustainable tourism indicators which is the DIT-ACHIEV model. This model was ahead of its time and designed in Ireland as part of a three year EPA funded project to develop indicators for the mitigation of tourism impacts (Griffin, Morrissey and Flanagan, 2010). The researchers are commended as the model received funding under a national scheme to the sum of €317,000. It had an objective to assess whether it can be implemented by the local community in any tourism destination.

A review of the DIT-ACHIEV model developed in 2007 has highlighted that it has been piloted but never applied on a regional or local level. Goodey (1995) suggested that a local network of interested parties is required to achieve sustainable tourism (1995). Denman (2006) proposed that a multi-interest working group should be created and wide public consultation is necessary for sustainable tourism. The model was piloted and the main difficulty encountered was engaging with the public. There was a second pilot destination where the aim was to develop a best practice toolkit for the implementation of sustainable tourism. This progressed to a focus of a toolkit. The model has since been renamed with a combination of terminology. In 2012, the model was renamed the DIT-ACHIEV model for sustainable tourism planning (Griffin, Flanagan and Fitzgerald, 2012).

**Figure 3.9** DIT- ACHIEV model of sustainable tourism indicators



Source: Flanagan et al. (2007).

This model has yet to be applied nationally, more than five years later. This may be due to the funding needed to apply the model. It was also unclear who should be responsible on a practical level for the implementation and use of the model. Furthermore, it seemed unclear as to where it should be positioned within the Irish tourism system. It was also noted that the model may benefit if the indicators were action oriented. Moreover, reducing an indicator set is necessary to allow practical implementation as indicators are needed to determine the sustainability of a tourism destination (Bossel, 2001).

The indicators represent six fields of interest, administration, community, heritage, infrastructure, enterprise and visitor (Griffin, 2007; Flanagan et al., 2007). It may be necessary to expand these if this model was ever applied for the sustainable management of tourism considering the fields which it represents. Indicators for the management of the natural environment should be more explicit. For the successful sustainable management education and training is required, the educational element of sustainable tourism is significant for a community's culture (Ghosh, 2012). It would be valuable to have this apparent in the model in addition to support for local entrepreneurs, products and services. It would be beneficial if the model was updated to integrate the GSTC (2012) sustainable tourism criteria for destinations and the EC ETIS (2013) for sustainable management at destination level, to conform to international best practice. Furthermore, it would be useful to indicate tools and concepts for the sustainable management of the destination such as those identified by Foh (1999).

Following a review of the DIT-ACHIEV model, it has become apparent that there is a need for a model to outline indicators of sustainable tourism that conform to the GSTC (2012) and the EC ETIS (2013). It would be advantageous if the model indicates what should be done and how to do it. For example, it may be beneficial to outline by whom the model should be implemented, how it should be applied, indicate where it may be used and a time frame in which it should be conducted. Acknowledgement of the issues identified is critical to the development of the model for this research. The model developed from this research will be action orientated and conform to (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013). It will also outline a variety of approaches such as tools and a set time frame that will contribute to the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

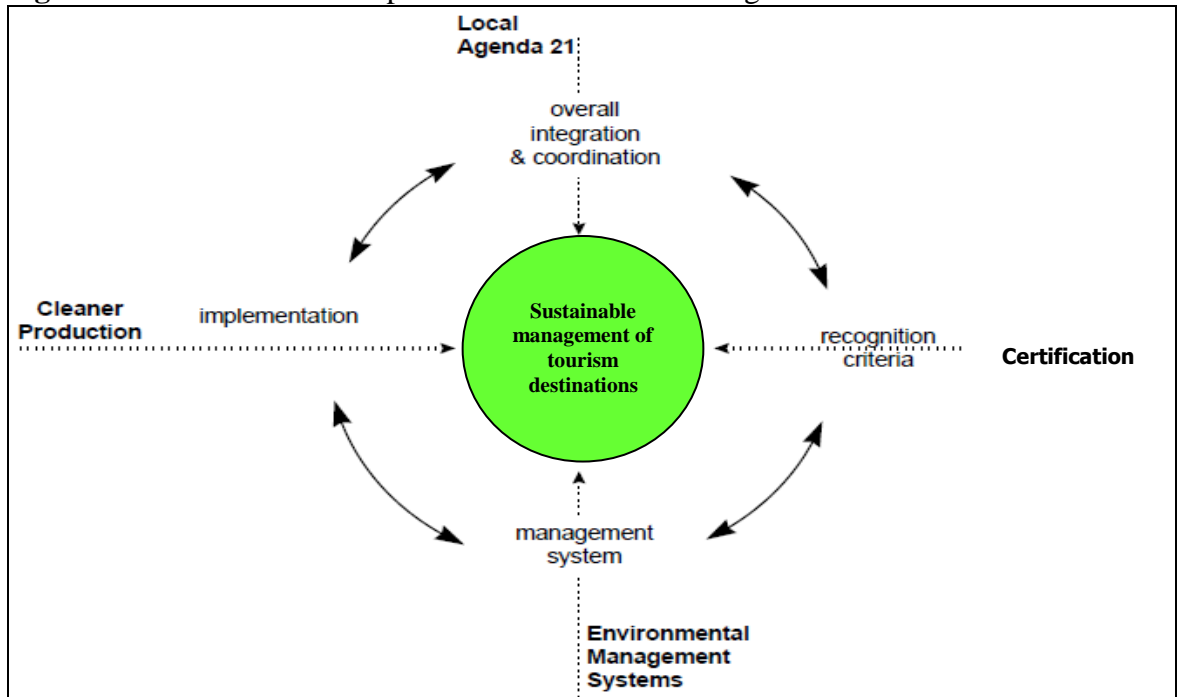
### **3.16 Approaches to the sustainable management of tourism destinations**

There are a variety of tools that may be used for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. Chapter two reviewed Mowforth and Munt (2009) tools of sustainability which are also of significant importance for destination management. Various tools possess different strengths and weaknesses depending on the characteristics of the destination. Therefore a combination of different tools is required to allow the best possible decision making. Destination regulations contribute toward a suitable environment even though tourism is regarded to be an industry relatively free from regulation (Ramm, 2001; Tepelus and Cordoba, 2005). To control the impact of tourism, regulations are needed (Page, 2003; ECOTRANS, 2006; Holden, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Graci and Dodds, 2010). They can be used to strengthen sustainability (ECOTRANS, 2006). Therefore, they are also important to be integrated to the framework presented at the end of the chapter.

Foh (1999) conducted research on tools and concepts that may be used to work toward sustainable tourism destinations. For the context of this research they will be discussed by how they may contribute toward the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The tools and concepts include, Environmental Management Systems (EMS), LA 21, cleaner production and eco-labelling which the researcher has amended to certification (Figure 3.10). At destination level, the tools need to be integrated for sustainable management as they contribute to different aspects. Foh suggests that even by integrating, they may not be sufficient for working toward implementing sustainable

tourism destinations. However they cover aspects considered as strategic imperatives for sustainable development of the Brundtland report. These tools and concepts are for use in different areas of the destination.

**Figure 3.10** Tools and concepts for the sustainable management of tourism destinations



**Source:** Adapted and modified from Foh (1999).

The EMS is developed as a response to pressure to show environmental performance (Chan, 2008). EMS can be applied to tourism at two levels; at the level of destination the EMS should be introduced in terms of setting policies, objectives, and targets of sustainable development for the destination (Lee, 2001), and at the (micro) organisation level of stakeholders involved in tourism within the destination. Many multinational companies are adopting EMS in response to pressure from their consumers, suppliers and local authorities (Clark, 1999; Morrison et al., 2000). Organisations may tend to use EMS as a way of enhancing relationships with consumer groups, communities and environmentally conscious investors (Pouliot, 1996; Stenzel, 2000; Roy et al., 2001; Chan, 2008). Adopting and implementing a formal EMS is considered worthwhile due to claimed benefits such as cost savings, reassurance of regulatory compliance, an improvement of the corporate image and operational efficiency (Taylor, 1992; Peattie, 1995; Welford, 1998; Chan, 2008). However without management's commitment to implement an EMS, the program is likely to fail (Kuhre, 1995; Chan, 2008). EMS as a methodology should be introduced as a management system.

The process of Local Agenda 21 (LA21) is relevant for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. Keating (1995) highlighted that chapter 28 of Agenda 21 spells out the importance of local authorities and the need to bring Agenda 21 to the local level.

Many of the problems and solutions listed in Agenda 21 have their roots in the local activities, so local authorities have a key role to play in making sustainable development happen.

Two thirds of the Agenda 21 action items relate to local councils. The sustainability of a local community is a crucial component of sustainable tourism destinations hence why LA21 is a necessary approach that needs to be integrated to destination management (Lee, 2001). Involve local communities in a 'bottom up' approach to their own development. No matter what the size, even if a destination is too small an entity, the LA21 principles can still be applied. Therefore LA21 needs to be factored in and play a role in the development of the model for this thesis. There are also elements of cleaner production that complement LA21.

Cleaner Production (CP) is the continuous improvement of industrial processes, products and services to reduce the use of natural resources. To prevent, at source the pollution of air, water and land and to reduce waste generation at source in order to minimise risk to human population and the environment (Van Berkel, 1996). As a concept, CP is seen as a problem solving strategy rather than a solution itself (Foh, 1999). CP can be applied to organisations no matter the size. Most of the priorities set out by the WTTC, UNWTO and Earth Council publication in Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry (1997) require some form of CP approach. Bleda and Valente (2009) indicate that the CP methods tend to be more expensive or require a reduction in attributes of the product that is appreciated by the consumers in a more immediate way. In order for sustainable tourism to achieve better results, CP should be integrated and internalised into the management system. However Lee (2001) indicates that it does depend on other means, tools and instruments.

Certification was discussed in detail in chapter two. It provides information to the consumers that products or services have met certain levels of environmental, economic and socio cultural performance. When Foh (1999) conducted this research, it indicated how certification was considered by governments and environmental groups as powerful, high-profile, low cost, market oriented instruments to promote protection of

the industry. In comparison to other forms of voluntary instruments, authentic certification is more credible if the products and services are endorsed and verified. An interesting example of certification managed by a governmental organisation is the Costa Rica Tourism Institute (ICT). They are in charge of managing the 'Certificate for Sustainable Tourism' (CST) initiative in Costa Rica as well as regulating, planning, promotion and commercialisation of the country's tourist services. They seek to encourage their tourism industry to adapt more sustainable practices such as certification. The aim of certification implementation across each sector of the destination is to shift tourism towards greater sustainable management through a destination level approach.

A study carried out by Logar (2009) on various tourism policies and tools highlighted that there was an unanswered question, which policy instruments could enable the sustainable management of a tourism destination? Subsequently, Logar conducted an assessment of nine policy instruments and their effectiveness. These instruments were eco-taxes, user fees, financial incentives, certification, quotas, zoning, tradable building permits and changes in property rights. The instruments were assessed by stakeholders according to the following criteria:

- (1) potential effectiveness in mitigating the identified tourism impacts
- (2) level of acceptance of the instruments, and
- (3) the feasibility of implementation of the instruments.

Regarding the effectiveness of certification, it received fairly high acceptance along with zoning. Many researchers have recognised that through the use of zoning for example, that the magnitude and type of tourism development should vary from location to location according to environmental characteristics (Dowling, 1993; Wall, 1993; Lane, 1994; Sanson, 1994; Hunter, 1997). The stakeholders also unanimously agreed that introducing certification for accommodation services would encourage providers to improve their facilities. Other social actors thought that it may be an incentive for illegal accommodation providers to register in order to receive certification. The economic and technical feasibility of certification was also thought to be possible. For seasonality issues such as improving accommodation quality and controlling unregistered accommodation, certification was perceived to be one of the most effective instruments. Furthermore, it was indicated that certification may enhance the quality of tourism products and may also improve destination image and quality. As an approach to the



sustainable management of a tourism destination, the tool of sustainable tourism certification is recognised as the broadest in coverage. For an examination of the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare, the theoretical framework will integrate the tools and concepts outlined by Foh (1999) and Mowforth and Munt (2009).

### **3.17 Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria for destinations**

Separate to the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) for hotels and tour operators, a GSTC for destinations was launched in 2012. The criteria were developed as part of the response of the tourism community to the global challenges of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. The second draft of the GSTC for destinations may be seen in detail in Appendix C.

The criteria are guiding principles and performance indicators that have been designed to lead destination managers, communities, and businesses on a path towards sustainability. Likewise to those discussed in chapter two, these complement the existing criteria. There are 41 specific actions that a destination can use to demonstrate sustainable destination management, maximise economic benefits to the host community, and maximise benefits to communities, visitors, cultural heritage and the environment. They are intended to describe a globally applicable set of minimum steps needed to approach sustainability. Thus they are seen as a baseline that each destination should add to or adjust as needed.

The criteria and indicators were developed based on already recognised criteria and approaches. These include for example, the UNWTO destination level indicators, GSTC criteria for hotels and tour operators, and other widely accepted principles and guidelines. They reflect certification standards, indicators, criteria, and best practices from different cultural and geo-political contexts around the world in tourism and other sectors where applicable. Potential indicators were screened for relevance and practicality, as well as their applicability to a broad range of destination types.

It must be noted that the GSTC does not aim to certify destinations as sustainable. Rather, the council will review existing certification standards and acknowledge those that meet the criteria. Any destination may use the new criteria as a guide to becoming environmentally, culturally, and socially sustainable (Harms in Widness and Wiggins,

2012). On application of the criteria, it is recommended that it is applied to the greatest extent practical, unless there is a situation where a criterion is not applicable. In this case, justification is to be provided. The GSTC (2012) acknowledge there may be circumstances where the criterion is not applicable to a specific tourism destination or destination management organisation, given the local regulatory, environmental, social, economic or cultural conditions. Furthermore, they acknowledge smaller destinations and communities may not be able for the comprehensive application of all criteria in the case of limited resources.

It was indicated that the monitoring of impacts is not an end in itself and how it should be viewed as a tool for improving the sustainability of the destination. It is imperative that international best practice, in this case the GSTC is integrated to the development of the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. It is acknowledged that some of the GSTC criteria may not be applicable to the Irish tourism industry, the European efforts toward sustainable tourism are possibly more focused.

### **3.18 Europe working towards sustainable tourism**

The influence and implementation of sustainable tourism has been the core focus of a number of initiatives being carried out in Europe. The major initiatives are discussed in relation to this thesis. The aims for the sustainability of European tourism were proposed (Table 3.6) by reflecting on the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) 12 aims of sustainable tourism (Figure 2.3) as part of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) (TSG, 2007). The aims should apply to policies and actions affecting the impact of outgoing tourism from Europe and support to the industry as an international development tool. These actions may be implemented through processes to encourage sustainable destinations (Tourism Sustainability Group, 2007).

**Table 3.6** Aims for the sustainability of European tourism

<b>1 Economic prosperity</b>
a. To ensure the long term competitiveness, viability and prosperity of tourism enterprises and destinations.
b. To provide quality employment opportunities, offering fair pay and conditions for all employees and avoiding all forms of discrimination.
<b>2 Social equity and cohesion</b>
a. To enhance the quality of life of local communities through tourism, and engage them in its planning and management
b. To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.
<b>3 Environmental and cultural protection</b>
a. To minimise pollution and degradation of the global and local environment and the use of scarce resources by tourism activities.
b. To maintain and strengthen cultural richness and biodiversity and contribute to their appreciation and conservation.

Source: Adapted from Tourism Sustainability Group (2007).

The SDS has a fourth key objective: meeting our international responsibilities. There is indication in the report of a call for the active promotion of sustainable development worldwide. It was suggested that taking it by destination is a realistic way to do this. Therefore the development of the research model specifically for a destination is a step in the right direction. The actions of the SDS are positive yet in an attempt for the sustainability of European tourism, it possibly could be strengthened. From looking at the aims for the sustainability of European tourism, not all the aims for sustainable tourism are included. Cultural richness is referred to but not adequately addressed. This generates an understanding as to why the GSTC have assigned a specific segment for cultural heritage.

The European Commission proposed a new political framework for tourism in Europe in 2010. It was indicated that it is essential for all operators in the sector to combine efforts and work within a consolidated political framework. This takes account of the new EU priorities set out in the 'Europe 2020' strategy: Europe must remain the world's Number one destination, able to capitalise on its territorial wealth and diversity. The actions are to complement the policies of the Member States. The success of the strategy will depend on the commitment of all stakeholders and on their capacity to work together to implement it.

The Commission has implemented a number of tools, guidelines and initiatives to support sound management for businesses and destinations:

- The EU Eco-label (1992).
- EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) (1995).
- Using natural and cultural heritage for the development of sustainable tourism in non-traditional tourism destinations (2002).
- Using natural and cultural heritage for the development of sustainable tourism in traditional tourism destinations (2002).
- EU flower (Eco-label) for tourist accommodation (2002).
- European Destinations of Excellence EDEN (2006).
- Actions for More Sustainable European Tourism (2007).
- *NECSTouR* Network of European Region for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (2007).
- The European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism (2012).
- European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Management at Destination Level (2013).

Initiatives such as the EU eco-label, EU flower, EU eco-management and audit scheme have been implemented in Ireland. At destination level, there has been the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN). The EDEN project promoting sustainable tourism development models across the European Union has been running since 2006. The project is based upon annual national competitions for the selection of a destination of excellence for the countries that participate. There are a number of aims to be fulfilled (Table 3.7).

**Table 3.7** EDEN: Aims of the preparatory action

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhancing visibility of the emerging European tourist destinations of excellence, especially the lesser known;</li> <li>• creating awareness of Europe's tourist diversity and quality;</li> <li>• promoting all European countries and regions;</li> <li>• helping de-congestion, combat seasonality, rebalance the tourist flows towards the non-traditional destinations;</li> <li>• awarding sustainable forms of tourism;</li> <li>• creating a platform for the exchange of good practices at European level;</li> <li>• promoting network between awarded destinations which could persuade other destinations to adopt sustainable tourism development mode.</li> </ul>
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Source: European Commission (2012).

In 2009, the focus of EDEN was upon cycling tourism in Europe and its contribution to sustainable tourism. The objective in 2010 was to provide added value in improving the sustainability and competitiveness performance of European cycling tourism. This was followed in 2011 with a "sustainable tourism" preparatory action to focus on particular objectives as outlined in Table 3.8. There are a number of EDEN destinations in Ireland including the Great Western Greenway in Mayo and Loop Head Peninsula in County Clare.

**Table 3.8** Main objectives of the sustainable tourism preparatory action 2011

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raising awareness of the contribution of different cultures to a common European identity, through the understanding of Europe's history and integration process and common values on the basis of its tangible, intangible and natural heritage;</li><li>• Promoting the role of cultural tourism as a factor for sustainable economic development, European citizenship and intercultural dialog;</li><li>• Promoting sustainable and responsible tourism within the EU and neighbouring countries;</li><li>• Reinforcing the image and profile of Europe as a high-quality destination among European and third-country citizens;</li><li>• Strengthening the capacity of tourism operators and small enterprises in remote and less known destinations to reach out to new publics, facilitating the exchange of experiences and their networking and clustering efforts;</li><li>• Stimulating competitiveness and innovation of the tourism industry in the European Union.</li></ul>
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Source: European Commission (2012).

The aims and objectives outlined in Table 3.7 and 3.8 indicate the efforts by the European Commission to integrate sustainable tourism however no linkage has been made to the GSTC. There appears to be multiple organisations attempting to conduct efforts in the sustainable management of tourism at a large scale.

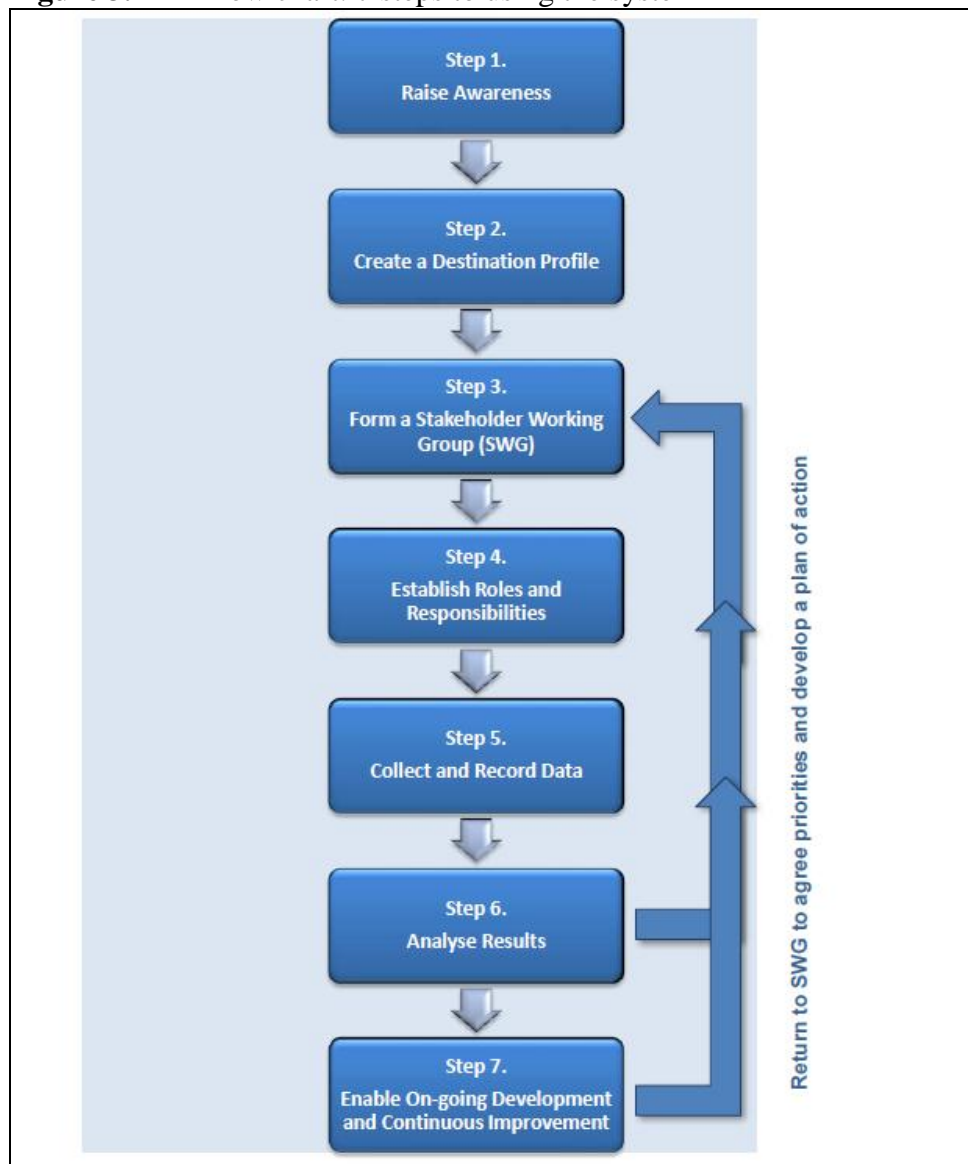
The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism was established through the EUROPARC federation which represents around 450 members in 36 countries. It is a pan-European, politically independent, non-governmental organisation. This is a practical management tool which helps protected areas to continuously improve the sustainable development and the management of tourism. It takes into account the needs of the environment, the local population and the local tourism businesses (EUROPARC Federation, 2012). It must be noted how this charter for protected areas in Europe does not address the sustainable management of a tourism destination. However this is the focus of the European Tourism Indicator System (2013).

### **3.19 European Tourism Indicator System**

The European Commission launched the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) in 2013. The ETIS toolkit is specifically intended for sustainable management at destination level. It was a key initiative developed in response to the priority that Europe maintains its position as the leading tourism destination in the world. The ETIS aims to contribute by improving the sustainable management of destinations by providing stakeholders with an easy and useful toolkit. Furthermore, to help them measure and monitor their sustainability management processes, also to enable them to share and benchmark their progress and performance in the future.

The ETIS has the strength of being developed as a result of lessons learned from previously existing indicator system initiatives. Research was made on 35 indicator systems from across the world, refined to 20 systems and those most relevant to the EU analysed in depth. Influences upon it have been LA21, UNWTO and UNEP 12 aims of sustainable tourism, the EC report (2003) on sustainable tourism and the TSG. Further influences were the work from the NECSTouR and EDEN destination feasibility testing (2010). The indicators were fine-tuned as a result of feedback from field testing in different destinations in Europe. The indicators are available to view in detail in Appendix D. The comprehensive system includes a process (Figure 3.11) and methodology rather than just a list of indicators.

**Figure 3.11** Flow chart: 7 steps to using the system



Source: European Commission (2013).

The process initiates by deciding to measure destination sustainability with the ETIS. The decision is to be communicated to as many as possible to encourage involvement and raise awareness. For the involvement of stakeholders and to have the system taken seriously, it would benefit by being fed through from the EU to the national level in order for the tourism authorities to initiate, fund, co-ordinate and provide the support required. After all a study by Miller et al. (2010) identified that respondents place greater responsibility on the government to be responsible for promoting more sustainable tourism and to address environmental problems. Furthermore that legislation would be necessary to introduce and reinforce any behaviour change.

The second step is to create a destination profile. This is followed by step three, to establish a Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) to generate involvement and interest. A basic principle of the ETIS is that destination responsibility, ownership and decision making is shared. Engaging a group to come together and work together to collect and report information is a powerful way to undertake effective destination management. The ETIS has been developed so that it may be implemented without any specific training. However, a lack of the necessary skills and expertise may create challenges in the implementation of the ETIS. From a review of tourism theory, at this point it may be best to have the DMO integrated to lead and co-ordinate the process.

The ETIS is to be a locally owned and led process. The SWG members are to collect data for each indicator. The ETIS toolkit has provided a list of possible stakeholders for the indicator data collection (Table 3.9). As much as the notion is to generate a sense of ownership and commitment, this may not be realistic to future proof the process. Perhaps this is where a destination manager position is required for a progressive approach rather than the ETIS suggestion of a 'local champion'. However the list (Table 3.9) may be beneficial to help destination managers identify from which stakeholder group that specific data may be collected.

**Table 3.9** List of possible stakeholders for indicator data collection

STAKEHOLDER	RELEVANT INDICATOR
Private sector representative/s, e.g. head of local Hotel Association	A.2.1, B.2.1, B.2.2, B.5.1, C.3.1, D.2.1
Destination management organisation	A.1.1, A.2.1, A.3.1, A.4.1, B.1.1, B.1.2, B.2.1, B.2.2, B.3.1, C.1.1, C.2.1, C.4.1, D.1.1, D.1.2, D.8.1
Tourism authority	A.1.1, A.2.1, A.3.1, A.4.1, B.1.1, B.1.2, B.2.1, B.2.2, B.3.1, C.1.1, C.2.1, C.4.1, D.1.1, D.1.2, D.8.1
Destination marketing/PR agency	A.4.1,
Local authority staff concerned with employment/economy	B.1.2, B.2.1, B.3.1, C.2.1, D.2.1
Education institutions	C.2.1
Local community organisation	C.1.1, D.8.1
Local authority planning department	D.1.1, D.1.2, D.2.1, D.7.1, D.8.1
Organisation concerned with preservation of local culture/heritage	C.4.1
Local authority transport department	D.1.1, D.1.2, D.2.1
Local authority climate change officer	D.2.1
Local authority waste management department	B.3.1, D.3.2
Local water and sewerage provider	D.4.1, D.5.1, D.9.1
Local authority noise control department	D.8.1
Local electricity provider	D.6.1
Organisation concerned with protection of the local environment/wildlife	D.2.1, D.7.1, D.8.1
Local authority department with responsibility for protected areas	C.4.1, D.7.1

Source: European Commission (2013).

Step 5 of the ETIS is to collect and record data. The data collection process is to bring the various data sources together to build a detailed picture of the destinations industry. The ETIS has developed sample surveys which may be used to collect the data. Furthermore, a beneficial tool is the destination dataset to share the information collected. The ETIS has not outlined a specific timeframe in which the data is to be collected. If the system was integrated to the destinations tourism planning process it may then have a specific timeframe. As a co-ordinated approach to gathering and storing the data, a virtual tourism observatory would be beneficial. The idea of this observatory is an action planned for by the European Commission (EC, 2010) to stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (2011) has also made reference to a virtual global observatory for sustainable tourism. Such a tool may be beneficial for destination monitoring and



evaluation. Tourism is an information-intensive industry and managing this information is crucial to the success of the industry (Sheldon, 1997; Werthner and Klein 1999; Buhalis, 2003; Ali, 2009).

Once the destination dataset is developed, the results are to be reviewed and analysed. A decision on some realistic benchmarks or targets may be made and the agreement of a plan on how to achieve the actions. The results will have identified areas of importance and may develop an action plan to tackle immediate priorities. The final step is to enable ongoing development and continuous improvement. It is suggested that the SWG should aim to draw up a three year plan which outlines what the group expect to achieve, when and with areas of responsibility clarified. Furthermore, this step notes the importance to regularly review the indicators and the data being collected. In time, it is indicated that the data collected should help tell a story about the destination that can be integrated into marketing and communications plans as well as forming a long term strategy and policy. Following the process, it returns to the SWG to agree priorities and develop a plan of action.

The development of the European Commission ETIS may contribute to improving the sustainable management of destinations. It has been developed to provide the stakeholders with an easy and useful toolkit. However, the process for using the system is not without its weaknesses. Even though stakeholder input is a common element of planning processes (Moscardo, 2011) the ETIS has no focus on a DMO or destination manager. The DMO or destination manager may be more effective to collect the data in addition to the stakeholders and 'local champion'. After all a destination manager is required in the practice of destination management (Longjit, 2010). Refinement of the up to date toolkit is critical to this research as it has a focus on the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The development of the research model for the transition towards the sustainable management of a tourism destination seeks to have a strong theoretical basis conforming to international best practice therefore it is necessary to integrate the ETIS. The ETIS will be integrated within suitable context to the model developed (objective e) for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

### **3.20 Towards a framework to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination**

While there have been many reviews of different concepts, tools, approaches and a host of other techniques to shape the sustainable management of a tourism destination, there is no single framework to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination in Ireland. By combining elements that emerge from the theory (Foh, 1999; Cooper, 2002; Howie, 2003; Page, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Australian Government, 2004; Jamieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2007; Holden, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Moscardo, 2011; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013), it is possible to construct a specific framework with great applicability to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

The framework shown in (Table 3.10) has been designed and is used in this thesis to first determine the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism destinations. It is also used to gather data from tourism stakeholders and examine the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare. The framework will inform the construction of strategic open ended questions and a content analysis tool to conduct an analysis of County Clare's tourism management organisations operations, strategies and plans. Consequently address the second aim of this research.

There are separate areas within the framework. These are discussed firstly in isolation following a top-down approach and then combined. The first section was designed to assess the demand for sustainable tourism destinations and address the supply. A driver for tourism stakeholders to implement sustainable management was due to the demand from conscientious consumers (SNV, 2009). The need to determine and predict tourist demand is noted in several tourism planning processes (Moscardo, 2011). Theorists have outlined that destination development can be seen in terms of meeting the market demand (Butler, 1980; Pearce, 1989; Prideaux, 2000; UNESCAP, 2003; Jamieson, 2006). This section will allow the researcher to bridge the gap in knowledge regarding the demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. A straightforward assessment will also determine the supply of sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland.

**Table 3.10** Framework to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination

Assess the demand for sustainable tourism destinations
Assess the supply of sustainable tourism destinations
Determine the tourism destination parameter
Identify a DMO to lead and co-ordinate Assess DMO interaction with stakeholders
Identify a destination manager Determine the funding of a tourism destination manager
Identify vision of a tourism destination Identify timeframe for the vision
Examine the management of factors involved in the sustainable management of a tourism destination:
Destination policy and planning Destination policy and planning, Destination Analysis, Policy Development, Transport planning, Land use and physical planning, Monitoring and evaluation
Macro environment Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological, Natural, Climatic, Environmental, Geographical
Organisation and management structure Design of organisational structures, Development of leadership and management capacities, Management of Stakeholder participation
Destination operations and core resources Waste, Water quality, Air quality, Wildlife, Forest/plant, Habitat, Visitor, Biodiversity, Resident/community, crisis management, commemorative integrity, Culture and history
Product marketing and development Product development, Training for product development, Location, Safety/Security, Cost/Value, Awareness/Image, Visitor management, marketing research, a developed marketing strategy, a developed promotion strategy, quality of service or experience
Identify destination regulations Assess the destination management tools implemented EMS, LA21, Cleaner Production, Certification (accredited), Education, Industry Regulation, Visitor Management Techniques, Environmental Impact Assessment, Carrying capacity calculations, Consultation and Participation techniques, Codes of conduct, Sustainability Indicators, Fair trade in tourism, Area Protection, Footprinting and carbon budget analysis

Source: Adapted and modified from (Foh, 1999; Cooper, 2002; Howie, 2003; Page, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Australian Government, 2004; Jamieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2007; Holden, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Moscardo, 2011; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013).

The next section of the framework is to determine the tourism destination parameters and identify the DMO. It assesses if there is a DMO to lead and co-ordinate as the DMO has a vital role in managing tourism (TSG, 2007; UNWTO, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008; Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). This is followed by investigating if the DMO interacts effectively with stakeholders as the presence of a DMO that involves different stakeholders is required for planning and managing tourism and addressing its impacts (Heath, 2002; Page, 2003; TSG, 2007; UNWTO, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008).

Following on, the framework addresses the need to identify a destination manager. Indeed no such position of a destination manager is realistic if there is no funding therefore this is also examined. This is followed with the need to identify the vision of

the tourism destination and its timeframe. A shared vision is pivotal as it demands a future perspective (Vogel and Swanson, 1988; Getz, 1994; Korac - Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1998; Ritchie, 1993, 1999; Cooper, 2002; Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Presenza, 2006; Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington, 2007; UNWTO, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008; Longjit, 2010).

The framework includes a section to examine the management of factors involved in the sustainable management of a tourism destination. This addresses the core fundamental elements of tourism management and critical components for the competitiveness and sustainable management of a tourism destination. The aspects addressed are destination policy and planning as destinations and their management are best set within the context of policy and planning (Cooper et al., 2008). It also considers the macro environment as its impact is important on the industry and destination (Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). The factor of the organisation and management structure is integrated as the appropriate management of this will provide the individual stakeholders to establish better co-operation and co-ordination of activities (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Wang and Xiang, 2007; Formica and Kothari, 2008; Pansiri, 2008; Wang, 2008; Haugland et al., 2011). Furthermore, the management of the destination operations and core resources and the co-ordinated management of product marketing and development are encompassed (Jamieson, 2006).

Destinations are unique, hence the need to combine and integrate various regulations and tools for the sustainable management of the product (Foh, 1999; Page, 2003; ECOTRANS, 2006; Holden, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Graci and Dodds, 2010). The identification of destination regulations and tools is integrated to recognise those implemented by the destination. Furthermore examine if the tourism stakeholders self-regulate. All sections of the framework combine to determine the sustainable management of tourism in a destination as reached by the stakeholders involved in the study. The implementation of this framework will allow the researcher to establish findings on the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare.

### 3.21 Conclusion

From the review of this literature, it is evident that tourism destination management and the sustainable management of a tourism destination is not a straight forward process. The critical questions that arose from the review of the literature and inform the development of this study are:

- The complexity of destination management and terms related to the concept;
- The changing roles of a DMO and their interaction with the stakeholders;
- The importance of a time specific shared vision of sustainability for the future of a tourism destination;
- The role of a destination manager and funding the position;
- Evolving tourism planning approaches;
- The recognition of the role of various tools, concepts, destination regulations, criteria and indicators; and
- The challenge in moving the sustainable management of tourism into practical implementation at the destination scale.

Tourism destinations depend upon complex development, planning, management and stakeholder involvement. These give rise to issues concerning definition debates, defining a destination parameter, who manages the destination, the demands influencing the management process and the need to address the growing concern internationally about how best to approach the sustainable management of tourism destinations. Rather than purely focus on the theoretical debate on sustainable tourism destinations, this research concentrates on putting the sustainable management of tourism into practice at the destination scale. Therefore providing the information and tools that may potentially enable a destination to delay or transform its lifecycle. A definition for the sustainable management of a tourism destination was developed according to the researchers understanding of the concepts identified in the literature and by integrating aspects of the UNWTO (2004) and Costa Rican Tourism Institute definition of sustainable tourism (ICT, 2005) identified in chapter two:

The sustainable management of a tourism destination refers to the management of the environment, economic, social and cultural heritage aspects of tourism in a way that is appropriate to the tourists, the destination as it has been defined, the environment and the host population. The sustainable management of a tourism destination requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, an appointed destination manager as well as strong political leadership working towards a shared vision to ensure wide participation and consensus building. This is a continuous process which contributes to other programs of national development that requires constant monitoring.

With several management areas, there lies a challenge in moving the sustainable management of tourism into practical implementation (Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005; Graci, 2007; EPA, 2008; Hanrahan, 2008; Dodds and Butler, 2009; Graci and Dodds, 2010). Ireland's only model of sustainable tourism indicators, the DIT-ACHIEV which is theoretical in nature has yet to be applied, seems to lack detailed guidance such as how it should be applied, by whom and who will fund its implementation. The need for a model specifically for the sustainable management of a tourism destination was identified in the literature. It has been identified that any model developed from this thesis should integrate the elements of substantial commonality identified within tourism planning from Moscardos (2011) critique of analysing 36 tourism planning processes.

For the sustainable management of a tourism destination, the leadership and co-ordination of a DMO is required. It is also pivotal to have a destination manager with the necessary skills and expertise who has a reliable funding base. The destination manager is typically from the local authority (Enterprise DG Publication, 2003) and this will be incorporated to the development of the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of a tourism destination. It is critical that the destination has a time specific shared vision of the destination's future to work towards. Even though the sustainable management of a tourism destination has received little academic attention in Ireland, it is being consolidated at an international and European level. The ETIS (2013) demonstrates a precedent for the sustainable management of tourism destinations however lacks detail on how it may be realistically implemented at the destination level. These indicators can be complemented by the GSTC (2012) which have been designed to lead destination managers on a path towards sustainability. The ETIS (2013) and GSTC (2012) are imperative for the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

The issues concerning a destination parameter, the DMO, destination manager, a shared vision, tourism planning process, destination policy, regulations and tools, the ETIS and GSTC were critiqued and integrated to the theoretical framework to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Establishing the demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland and examining the sustainable management of a tourism destination will contribute to an informed approach in the development of

the research model. The next chapter discusses the research approach and methods utilised to gather and critically analyse the data collected for this thesis.

### RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD

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#### 4.1 Background to research

This chapter details the research approach and methodology for this thesis. The chapter states the aims and objectives of the research. It reports on the design and implementation of a multi-methodology intervention to support a comprehensive overview for the research conducted. The sources of theory that contributed to the design of the qualitative and quantitative research methods and rationale for respondent selection are outlined. The methods success which had a high response rate was enabled through the innovative approach using sponsorship, a competition, refreshment all packaged on a postcard to reel in responses is explained. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of the research strengths and limitations encountered.

The general aim and specific objectives of the research were identified in chapter one and are revisited. The aims of the research:

1. Assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland
2. Examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination (County Clare)

This requires the examination of a number of complementary objectives:

- a) Assess the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland.
- b) Assess the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare.
- c) Determine the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland.
- d) Examine the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare.
- e) The development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

The goal of research is to provide society with more advanced knowledge (Veal, 2006). In a collective achievement of the objectives outlined, the data gathered intends to achieve the goal of research.



## **4.2 Research approach and methodology**

For the fulfilment of the research aims and objectives, careful consideration had to be given to the plethora of research paradigms and methods available. The stance and contention of the study was formed based on the assumption that research on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland in addition to the sustainable management of a tourism destination would benefit from broad methodological approaches. There is no right or wrong philosophical stance (Holden and Lynch, 2004). Therefore the methodological decisions made for the research were driven by the purpose of the research.

Knowledge of philosophy underpins the methodology. It enables the researcher to recognise the design that best fits the research and clarify the overall configuration. The configuration took into consideration the kind of evidence to be gathered, from which sources and how the evidence would be interpreted to provide quality findings to the research topic (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991). The philosophical direction helped the researcher clarify the research design that would work (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). This was an ontological multi-method approach even though a strict purist perspective might render mixed method research flawed and inappropriate (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). However less rigid perspectives insist this does not detract from the usefulness of multi-method designs (Creswell, 1994). In fact Edwards and Talbot (1999) advocate that in social research, pluralism is considered acceptable if not desirable. Furthermore, there is a view that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated by the counterbalancing strengths of another (Creswell, 1994; Mason, 1996; Bickman and Rog, 1998; Denscombe, 2003). Thus advancing the concept that qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complementary even though they derive from alternative ways of thinking and working is acceptable as they fit together perfectly for improving the quality of research. This can in turn not only complement but expand and triangulate the research. The methods utilised for this study were therefore used in three phases: an electronic mail survey, semi-structured interviews, and a content analysis, which took a number of stages to complete involving many stakeholders.

Theorists have acknowledged that there has been extensive research investigating the attitudes and perceptions toward tourism and tourism development. Yet, the majority

have focused on one specific stakeholder group such as residents (Allen, Long, Perdue and Kieselbach, 1988; Perdue, Long and Allen, 1990; Martin, 1995; Akis, Peristianis and Warner, 1996; Brunt and Courtney, 1999; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Besculides, Lee, and McCormick, 2002; Andereck, Valentine, Knopf and Vogt, 2005; Byrd, Cardenas and Dregalla, 2009). The studies found that differences exist in the attitudes and perceptions of different stakeholder groups toward tourism. Thus it was paramount for this study to include a range of tourism stakeholders.

The holidaymakers to Ireland and national tourism business participators were required to assess the demand for sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. For an assessment of the supply of sustainable tourism and the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare, a range of tourism stakeholders were required. The research incorporated many stakeholders: tourism businesses, domestic and international holidaymakers to Ireland, accommodation, attractions, activities, tour operators, transport, education providers, local authorities, retailers, airports, arts, recreational, promotion organisations and landscape charity. These stakeholders fit within Swarbrookes (2000) key stakeholders in sustainable tourism and Sheehan and Ritchie (2002) stakeholders relevant to destination success. They were chosen carefully to obtain a wide perspective to benefit the outcome of the research. Table 4.1 illustrates the methodological framework employed by this research:

**Table 4.1** Methodological framework

<b>Quantitative:</b>	Desktop research carried out on the sustainable management of tourism Desktop research carried out on tourism destination management Electronic mail survey for domestic and international holidaymakers to Ireland Electronic mail survey for national tourism businesses Content analysis of the tourism management organisations strategies and plans
<b>Qualitative:</b>	Development of strategic open ended questions for tourism stakeholder interviews Conferences in relation to the topic, national and international Pilot in-depth qualitative interviews Semi-structured qualitative interviews with key tourism stakeholders Transcribe, analysis and coding of qualitative interviews

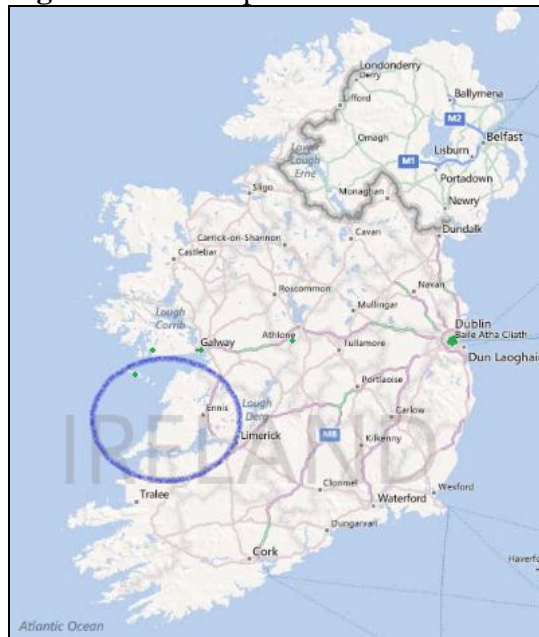
The data gathered through these approaches was analysed through methodological triangulation as no single method adequately clarifies an issue. Each method is compared and contrasted in light of new international theory available. This was required in order to draw the conclusion and recommendation of the research. Moreover to develop a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism

destinations conforming to international best practice (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013).

### 4.3 Geographic location of research

The destination chosen on which to build the basis of all the research was Ireland. The holidaymaker surveys were conducted at ten tourism attractions indicated by green dots on the map (Figure 4.1). For responses from the national tourism businesses, surveys were distributed to tourism businesses throughout the Republic of Ireland. The tourism stakeholder interviews took place in the study area circled, County Clare. The content analysis of the tourism management organisations strategies and plans was also carried out with a focus on County Clare. The entire research was conducted in the home country. This was due to the practicalities of where the researcher resides however holidaymaker responses were obtained from all over the world.

**Figure 4.1** Map of Ireland



Source: Bing Maps (2012)

The chosen study area was based accordingly so that the researcher had no bias or particular relevance to the area. Furthermore, to have the research based on an active tourism destination. It was also chosen in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland from their list of priority destinations.

#### **4.4 Quantitative research**

The tourism domain has traditionally adhered to the master paradigm of quantitative research. This was on the foundation that an economically driven industry requires statistical sophistication as a necessary condition for progress (Reid and Andereck, 1989; Riley and Love, 2000). Quantitative research techniques are traditionally said to be ‘data condensers’ that yield a relatively small amount of information about a large number of respondents or observations (Ragin, 1994). However, this methodological approach has been challenged as academia came to recognise that it could not fully address such questions as understanding and meaning (Havitz, 1994; Henderson and Bedini, 1995; Hollinshead, 1996; Riley, 1996; Walle, 1997). As a result, quantitative research is complemented through the qualitative approach taken.

Initially the research utilised a comprehensive literature review to ground the research in the current theory on the phenomenon being investigated. This was followed with the quantitative research conducted via electronic mail surveys and a content analysis. Surveys are a popular research method for investigating attitudes and opinions (Denscombe, 2007; Connolly, 2008). According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachinias, (1996) and Miller (2001) self-administered surveys are inexpensive, quick to administer and provide a good opportunity to obtain the largest possible response from a limited time and financial budget. This study found however that it was difficult to achieve the co-operation of holidaymakers for the requisite eight to ten minutes. Furthermore, inclement weather was also a significant deterrent for participation. Therefore self-administering surveys were found to be time consuming. As a result, a new approach was decided, electronic mail surveys.

The most commonly reported benefit of online methods are their low cost and fast response time (Schleyer and Forrest, 2000; Goritz, 2004). Yet a risk with mail surveys is that the intended person is not the one that completes the survey (Miller, 2001). This risk was overcome with the solution of carrying out onsite collection of holidaymakers email addresses face to face at various tourism locations in Ireland. For the tourism business survey, the businesses email addresses were obtained from the NTDA master database. Table 4.2 is a comparison of methods for completing quantitative research. It has been updated according to the findings from conducting the holidaymaker survey.

**Table 4.2** A comparison of surveys

Major Considerations	Types of Surveys			
	Face to Face	Telephone	Mail	Online Survey (emails collected on site)
Access to respondents	Limited only by hearing or speech impairment or disability	As in face to face Plus no access to phone or unlisted numbers	Limited by disability or illiteracy	Limited by disability or illiteracy and only to those that use emails
Response Rate	Very high	High	Low	Moderate
Interviewer Bias	High	Moderate	No bias	No bias
Control over the respondents identity	Very high	Low	Very low	Very high
Allowed complexity of instrument	Very high	Moderate	Very high	Low
Costs	Very high	Moderate	Low	Very high
Inconvenience	High	Moderate	Low	High

Source: Adapted and modified from (Wilhoit and Weaver, 1980; Sarantakos, 1997).

It seemed appropriate to update the methodology to include electronic mail surveys with the collection of respondents email addresses face to face. According to Dolnicar et al., (2009), in the tourism context, researchers are about four times more likely to use traditional methods to collect data. This researcher was delighted with the approach taken as we are in an online research era (Hung and Law, 2010). Nevertheless some scholars hesitate to replace the traditional research methods.

A content analysis of County Clare's tourism management organisations operations, strategies and plans was conducted to examine the sustainable management of tourism in this area. This represents quantification only on a limited scale, however it is still anchored within this research paradigm. Marshall and Rossman (1989) say that content analysis is a way of asking a fixed set of questions about data in such a manner as to produce countable results or quantitative descriptions. It is a means by which to produce solid descriptive information or to cross-validate other research findings. It has been noted that tourism researchers are increasingly using content and textual analysis as a means of critical investigation, particularly when faced with textual forms of data, i.e. written documents such as tourism policies, strategies and plans or even visual materials. As a result, this approach was considered ideal to examine the level of sustainable management of tourism evident within the strategies and plans. The findings from the content analysis were accompanied with those from the qualitative interviews. For this research, the analysis is not just interested in what is within the text of the strategies and plans but significantly what has been left out. The discussion to follow is

based on the quantitative research conducted via holidaymaker and tourism business electronic mail surveys and a content analysis.

#### **4.5 Electronic mail survey**

For the purpose of this research, two electronic mail surveys were designed. Both were similar, however adapted slightly as one was for holidaymakers (Appendix F), the other for tourism businesses (Appendix E). The surveys were initially developed to determine the demand for sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland, but the survey content was also structured to explore the national tourism business supply of sustainable tourism. Fáilte Ireland (NTDA) provided valuable input to ensure the embedded questions were appropriate and would be useful in generating new knowledge for the Irish tourism industry.

The risk of a large number of non-responses is a common problem associated with mail surveys. It was thought that by providing incentives it would be easier to obtain the required response rate. Subsequently, sponsorship was sought from Bewleys, a leading tea company in Ireland and Solis Lough Eske Castle, a five star hotel located in Donegal. An email was sent to various leading tea companies and the hotel informing them of the research, requesting support and outlined the benefits of participating. The email is included in Appendix G and H. Willing responses were received. Bewley's sponsored 5,000 individually wrapped special reserve fair-trade teabags. Solis Lough Eske Castle sponsored a two night break for two people sharing in a deluxe room, breakfast included with access to the spa. The sponsorship was used to incentivise tourism businesses and holidaymakers in particular to participate in the research.

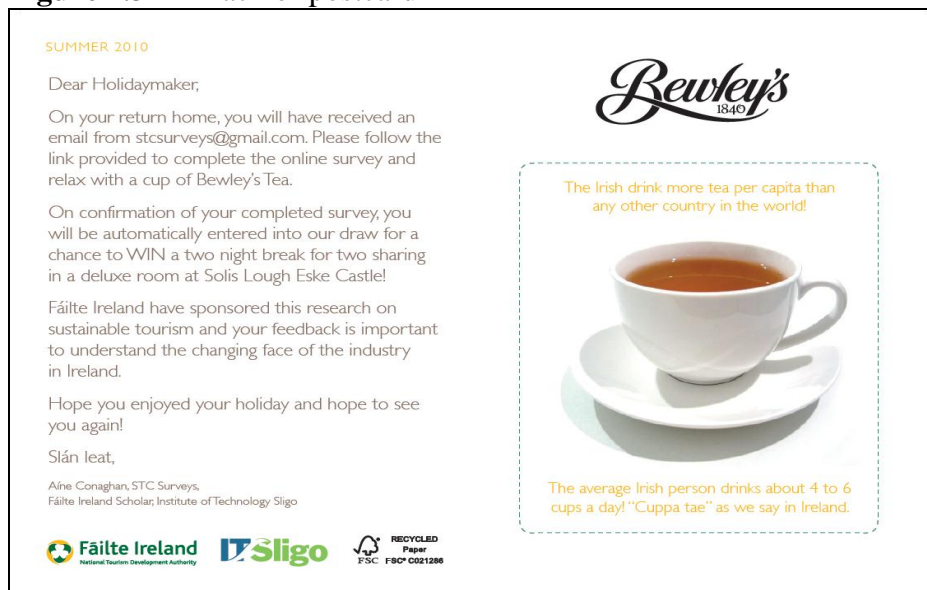
In order to communicate the incentive to participate, the researcher designed a postcard printed on recycled paper. The front of the postcard (Figure 4.2) had a picture of the five star Solis Lough Eske Castle Hotel. This worked as a form of marketing for the hotel and provided information on how it was 'winner of the world's best Luxury Country Hotel award 2009.'

**Figure 4.2** Front of postcard



The reverse of the postcard (Figure 4.3) provided the holidaymaker with information about the research. It outlined how they would receive a link to the survey through their email. And on completion, would be entered to win a break at the hotel featured on the front. Within the perforated line surrounding the cup of tea was information regarding how frequently the Irish drink tea. Attached with a glue dot within the outline was an individually wrapped Fairtrade Bewleys teabag (sample provided in Appendix I). This was to entice the holidaymakers to complete the survey in the comfort of their home.

**Figure 4.3** Back of postcard



For the holidaymakers to receive the electronic mail survey, there was the onsite collection of their email addresses. The postcards were a form of memento in exchange

for the email address. The data collection was conducted at various tourism locations in Ireland. To obtain an even spread of respondents, the chosen time to collect the data was daytime hours and weekends. The holidaymakers were approached, informed of the research topic and that it was sponsored by the NTDA. The postcard was presented and it was explained that on completion of the survey, they would be entered to win two nights at the five star castle hotel and spa, previously the winner of the world's best Luxury Country Hotel award in 2009. This was followed by questioning if they would be willing to complete the survey in the comfort of their own home, over a cup of Irish tea. The incentive coupled with the research topic usually generated interest.

The holidaymakers generally provided their email address and confirmed to be on holidays. In exchange for the email address, the holidaymaker received the postcard memento with individually wrapped tea bag attached (Figure 4.2, 4.3, Appendix I). The concept being that the memento would not only incentivise but also remind them to complete the survey. The incentivisation was used to combat concerns raised in the theory, primarily to combat the concern that respondents may not complete the survey. The holidaymaker was thanked for their co-operation. In many cases a picture was taken of the individual or group at the tourist location. Frequently, recommendations and directions were provided. After all, Sarantakos (1997) highlighted that being as gentle and polite as possible while presenting a survey in an attractive manner is helpful. Moreover the offer of rewards is a help.

The survey was emailed to the respondents. Internet-based surveys most often contend with considerable delays in receiving responses (Bryman, 2008). To combat a delay in responses, a time period to complete the survey was specified. The surveys in the appendices (Appendix E and F) were mailed to the respondents through the online survey operator in September 2010. The initial email to the holidaymaker included a message hoping they returned safe and had a pleasant visit. It reminded them of the research, provided a link to the survey and suggested they have their cup of tea while completing (Appendix J).



**Figure 4.4** Holidaymaker survey

**Sustainable Tourism Eco-certification: Tourist Survey**

**1. About You**

1 / 3

1. In which county/country are you resident?

2. How many nights in total did you spend on your holiday (in Ireland)?

3. What is your occupation? (Please give as much detail as possible) If none, what is the occupation of the main income earner in your household?

4. What age category do you fit into?

☐ Up to 18 years

☐ 19 - 24 years

☐ 25 - 34 years

As the survey was designed on Survey Monkey, an annual membership was purchased. The survey was clear, had an attractive appearance, used good colours, formats and drop down boxes with a list of answer choices (Figure 4.4). On completion of the survey, it ended with the beautiful picture of the castle hotel (Figure 4.5). They were then redirected to the hotel website. This was to create awareness and divert traffic to the hotels site as promised thus generating publicity on their behalf.

**Figure 4.5** Completion of survey

Thank you for completing this Survey!

Please enter your details below for a chance to win a two night break in a deluxe room at Solis Lough Eske Castle, County Donegal, Ireland. Donegal's only 5 star Hotel & Spa and winner of the World's best Luxury Country Hotel award 2009. Visit [www.solislougheskecastle.ie](http://www.solislougheskecastle.ie) for details

Name:

Country:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

The Draw will take place by October 25th 2010 and you will be contacted by email and phone if you are the lucky winner!

The electronic mail survey was resent numerous times to those whom had not already completed it. As Sarantakos (1997) indicated, two or three reminders are sufficient, in the case of this research, four were sent. This was considered necessary as various holidaymakers had informed that they would not be home for four to six weeks due to extensive travel. Therefore, the reminders provided those tourists with ample opportunity to complete.

The holidaymaker and tourism business surveys were developed by drawing upon related theory. The surveys were divided into three sections. The first section concentrated on the business itself, in the case of the holidaymaker survey it focused on their demographics. The second section examined the demand for sustainable tourism, sustainable tourism certification and sustainable tourism destinations. In addition to querying how important the UNWTO-UNEP (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism are for tourism destinations in Ireland. For this a set of closed ended questions were designed. A visual question to identify sustainable tourism certification labels was provided (Table 4.3). The selection of labels was grounded on those most significant to Ireland and the UK as well as some international labels.

**Table 4.3** Sustainable tourism certification labels used in the survey

			
1	2	3	4
			
5	6	7	8
			
9	10	11	12

The third section focused upon perceptions of sustainable tourism related issues identified from the literature. There was a list of statements with the possibility to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed in the form of a likert scale. To reduce the reliance of findings upon any one question and to increase reliability, several questions were often used to address each theme.

The following is a list of the lengthy process of the quantitative research approach undertaken from start to finish:

1. Develop and design the survey
2. Survey sent to Fáilte Ireland (NTDA) for feedback and approval
3. Pilot test of a self-administered survey
4. Design of the electronic mail survey
5. Email seeking sponsorship for incentivisation
6. Design the postcard

7. Attach teabag to postcard
8. Collection of holidaymakers email addresses at tourism locations
9. Upload all emails to a database
10. Email the surveys to the holidaymakers
11. Review email addresses that bounced in order to retrieve and make valid
12. Request sent to Fáilte Ireland (NTDA) for the national tourism businesses email addresses
13. Received a database of the national tourism businesses email addresses
14. Email surveys to the national tourism businesses
15. Resend electronic mail survey at intervals
16. Follow up with the sponsors
17. Prize awarded to the winning respondent
18. Analysis of the Data

The above discussion was predominantly based upon the approach to the holidaymaker survey. The approach to the tourism business survey was less complex. A request was sent to Fáilte Ireland (NTDA) for the email addresses of the national tourism businesses. A master database of emails was received. The procedure of emailing the survey was followed likewise to the holidaymakers. The process did not entail providing the tourism business respondents with postcards, however it included the opportunity to win the two night break, this was communicated through email. This method proved quick and easy access to the tourism business participants. It was effective in reaching busy professionals despite their dispersed geographic location within Ireland. The survey was similar to that of the holidaymaker. The relative simplicity of a quantitative survey allowed for a greater sample than qualitative studies (Connolly, 2008). The email and survey sent to the tourism businesses can be found in Appendix K and E.

#### **4.5.1 Sampling and selection**

Sampling is one of the most fundamental elements of research (Sarantakos, 1997). The method of selective random sampling was employed to collect the holidaymakers email addresses. Whereby each person who walked past that was likely to be a holidaymaker was asked to participate. It also had to be confirmed that they were a holidaymaker. The advantage of this method, as explained by Bryman (2008: 168) is that each member of the population has a known chance of being selected:

It is generally assumed that a representative sample is more likely to be the outcome when this method of selection from the population is employed.

Many other possible sampling techniques were rejected due to their openness to researcher bias (Biggam, 2008). Attendance of the interviewer could threaten the reliability of the research (Miller, 2001). The researcher preferred that there would be no opportunity whatsoever of creating bias. There was no interviewer bias intruding on the research due to completing the survey online.

A common problem regarding mail surveys is the risk of a large number of non-responses and one that would defeat the need for a large surveyed sample. There were a total of 4740 holidaymakers email addresses collected. This took place over a ten day period in high season of late August and early September. It was conducted onsite at tourism attractions in Ireland with the help of three other data collectors. Given that the focus of the research was to obtain responses from holidaymakers, on-site tourism locations gave the best opportunities to obtain holidaymakers contact details. The tourism locations chosen and positioning on the main thoroughfare ensured access to holidaymakers in a relaxed and appropriate environment. The locations chosen were willing to allow this data collection to be conducted onsite. Permission was obtained at each location.

1. Galway City
2. Coach Station, Galway City
3. Aran Ferries, Rosaveal – Inishmore
4. Dún Aonghasa, Inishmore
5. Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly
6. Trinity College, Dublin
7. Dublin Castle
8. Guinness Storehouse
9. Bus Aras, Dublin
10. National Museum of Ireland

The decision to carry out the data collection at these locations was for two reasons. Firstly they have a high footfall and would facilitate an expeditious, efficient collection of contact information. Secondly, the Irish suburbs are more so car dependent meaning smaller and slower flows of holidaymakers. Data collection solely at suburban locations could have resulted in a skewed sample. Reason being, holidaymakers to these destinations usually rent a car, for that reason age categories would differ. It was hoped that a mix of locations would give a variety of respondents across diverse socio-economic groupings.

The holidaymaker survey population was confined to overseas and domestic holidaymakers of Ireland. This confinement eliminated the larger number of visitors that pass through for reasons of business and otherwise. Holidaymakers for this study are defined as visitors who stated that their primary purpose for visiting the destination was a holiday (Fáilte Ireland, 2010c).

**Table 4.4** Overseas and domestic holidaymakers 2010

<b>Holidaymakers</b>	<b>Number (000)</b>
Overseas Holidaymakers	2,549
- Britain	896
- Mainland Europe	971
- North America	546
- Rest of World	137
Domestic Holidaymakers	4,604
- Long (4+ nights)	1,412
- Short (1-3 nights)	3,192
<b>Total Holidaymakers</b>	<b>7,153</b>

Source: CSO, Fáilte Ireland (2012)

Of the 4740 email addresses collected, 545 of the emails had bounced. In the end, 1356 surveys were completed resulting in a response rate of 32%. The result was related to the table for determining sample size from a given population (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) and holidaymaker figures (Table 4.4) (Fáilte Ireland, 2012a). The recommended sample size for a population of 7,153,000, a confidence level of 99%, and a margin of error (degree of accuracy) of 3.5% would be 1354. Therefore the response rate was almost exactly the recommended sample size.

The holidaymakers that responded include a wide variety of nationalities and age categories. The geographical distribution of the 1356 holidaymakers is evident in Table 4.5. The valid sample size (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) consisted of 18% domestic market, 2% from Northern Ireland and 18% from Britain. Tourist numbers from mainland Europe were at 26%, North America 28% and the rest of the world 8%. This gave a great variety to the results. Numbers in holidaymakers at that particular time of year had decreased from previous years due to the global economic downturn and unfavourable exchange rates with the euro.

**Table 4.5** Geographical distribution of the holidaymakers

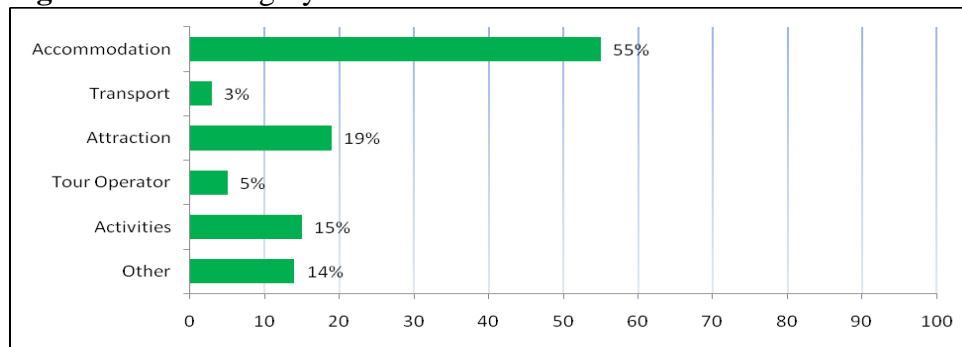
Britain	239	<b>North America</b>	
<b>Mainland Europe</b>		USA	294
Germany	73	Canada	79
Italy	53	<b>Rest of World</b>	
France	42	Australia	60
Spain	36	New Zealand	15
Netherlands	20	Asia	9
Sweden	15	Africa	8
Switzerland	14	South/Central America	9
Belgium	12	Middle East	7
Austria	12	Russia	4
Norway	10	<b>Total Overseas</b>	1071
Portugal	9	N. Ireland	33
Israel	10	Domestic Holidaymakers	249
Other Europe	43	<b>Total Holidaymakers</b>	<b>1356</b>

It was necessary to involve several categories of the national tourism businesses. Godfrey (1998) reinforced that there is scant research of those most likely to play the co-ordinating function of tourism management in destination communities. For a representation of all the tourism businesses, a stratified sample was employed. The tourism business survey was refined to those on the Fáilte Ireland master database for several reasons. They were chosen to participate due to their homogeneity in the sense that they are all tourism businesses. Furthermore, due to their heterogeneity as they would have different standards and practices in the development of their business activities. The researcher could also hypothesise that those on the database would be the most logical people to be involved in the sustainable management of tourism. Therefore, their views would be most relevant.

The survey was emailed to 2360 of the 2847 tourism businesses operating in Ireland that were on the Fáilte Ireland master database. This accounted for approximately 15% of the total tourism businesses in the country. Of the 2360 businesses emailed, 126 bounced therefore 2234 had received the email. A total of 369 tourism businesses completed the survey. In order to reach relevant conclusions, this response rate of 16.5% was complemented with data collected from the qualitative interviews. Overall the response rate figures match with an analysis of studies based on online research methods that were carried out over the past ten years by Hung and Law (2010). Their findings indicated that most of those studies had a response rate below 30%. It was important for this research to achieve a sample that provided a clear representation of the Irish tourism businesses.

The research related to the table for determining sample size from a given population (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). This was calculated according to the number of tourism businesses operating in Ireland on the Fáilte Ireland master database. The recommended sample size for a population of 2847, a confidence level of 90%, and a margin of error (degree of accuracy) of 4% would be 368. Therefore the response rate was almost exactly the recommended sample size.

**Figure 4.6** Category of the business



Studies in the past have only addressed hotels due to them being considered as the most representative units of the tourism industry (Álvarez, Burgos and Céspedes, 2001; González and León, 2001; Carmona-Moreno, Céspedes-Lorente and de Burgos-Jimenez, 2004; Parra, García and Guitiérrez, 2004; Claver-Cortés et al., 2007; Blanco, Rey-Maqueira, Lozano, 2009). However this research was also made up of attractions (19%) and activities (15%), which often provide the initial motivation for a tourist to visit a destination (Gunn, 1972; Page, 2003; UNWTO, 2007). A further minority of responses were from tour operators, transport and others. Some of the tourism businesses that participated fit within the category of ‘other’ in addition to the options outlined (Figure 4.6). It was necessary to receive responses from various businesses considering a fundamental ingredient in sustainable development efforts is the collaboration among key players (Sautter and Leisen, 1999). With the selection of respondents being an accurate representation and the sampling suffice, this allowed for the progression of the analysis.

#### 4.5.2 Data analysis

The analysis of the electronic mail survey was conducted through the online survey operator. This offered the opportunity for instant data entry as well as immediate data coding. Once the data was extracted from the surveys, it was input to the computer

programme Excel for further analysis. Information technology has changed the way we conduct research and analyse data (Evans and Mathur, 2005). The surveys division into three sections was beneficial to facilitate the analysis of responses: About You, The Demand and The Perceptions. Given the quantitative nature of the vast majority of the data collected, most of the fixed-choice questions were analysed automatically. Only two questions required textual analysis.

Following the data analysis, the findings were then explored. This could have been conducted from endless angles. Hence, it was important to pay attention to the advice of Oppenheim (2004). That is, although the analysis of the relationships between variables is often very interesting, there can appear to be ‘no end to it...for there always seems to be further interesting possibilities just beyond the horizon’. The researcher was wary of ending up with a vast number of tables that were of no use or interest. However, the tables were important visual displays of information in order to facilitate the understanding of the data.

#### **4.6 Content analysis of tourism strategies and plans**

Content analysis was another quantitative tool utilised to accumulate data from the County Clare’s tourism management organisations strategies and plans. Content analysis is utilised in tourism studies primarily to assess how places are presented in the tourism promotional literature (Beeton and Hardy, 2001). Conversely, this research employs the analysis to examine if the sustainable management of tourism is evident within County Clare’s tourism management organisations strategies and plans. This was to contribute to the outlined objective (e).

The study examined the content that related to the framework to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination. According to Zipf’s law (1949) the assumption is that, words and phrases mentioned most often are those reflecting important concerns in every communication. Stone et al (1966: 5), cited by Beeton and Hardy (2001: 183) describes content analysis as:

‘Any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text’.

Therefore a quantitative content analysis can involve; word frequencies, space measurements and keyword frequencies (Neuendorf, 2002). Comparisons were made



regarding the level of sustainable management of tourism addressed and its depth of content to the strategies and plans was incorporated to the analysis.

#### 4.6.1 Sampling and selection in County Clare study

Given the research was to examine the sustainable management of tourism evident within County Clare's tourism management organisations strategies and plans, these first had to be selected. The research involved a complete population whereby all the current strategies and plans available for the management of tourism in Clare were examined.

**Table 4.6** Organisations involved in managing tourism in County Clare

Organisation	Destination
NTDA	Ireland
Shannon Development	Shannon Region
Shannon Heritage	Shannon Region
Shannon Trails Initiative	Shannon Region
Mid West Regional Authority (MWRA)	Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary
Clare County Council	County Clare
Clare County Development Board	County Clare
Clare Local Development Company	County Clare
Clare Tourism Forum	County Clare
Clare Tourist Council	County Clare
LEADER	County Clare
Burren Beo	Burren
Burren Connect	Burren

This procedure yielded a full success rate yet there was difficulty in obtaining some of the strategies and plans. It is possible that not all of the tourism management organisation reports were available.

#### 4.6.2 Data analysis, County Clare case study

For the purpose of the data analysis of the content analysis, the strategies were examined alongside the framework to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination (Figure 6.1). For transparency to compare efforts between the framework and actual management according to the strategies and plans, the data was input orderly to a table. The style and layout adopted for the analysis to facilitate interpretation of the findings is similar to the layout of (Table 4.6). However there was a variation of the second column as it was specific to the subject matter. Within this column a tick was input if the subject was addressed or (-) indicated there was no related data evident.

Various sections of the framework and the content analysis was analysed and discussed in the context of current international literature. The data was connected to qualitative findings as a result of the responses from the key stakeholder interviews. It is hoped that the review of the strategies and plans according to this topic of research may be conducted via a content analysis in future in the context of a possible longitudinal study.

#### **4.7 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research usually involves a small number of respondents or observations that are in depth. It can be defined as a mode of research that does not place its emphasis on statistics or statistical analysis, it is the objective measurement and analysis of the data collected (Goodson and Phillimore, 2004). It is more suited to situations where there is little known about the topic. This was of course beneficial for this study. Qualitative research methods are intended to gain insight into the phenomenon in question hence why they are sometimes referred to as 'data enhancers'. It allows crucial elements of a problem or phenomenon to be seen more clearly (Ragin, 1994). According to Walle (1997), qualitative methods have become increasingly appropriate to researchers of tourism as they begin to explore personal feelings, perception and attitudes. Particularly of host communities and the impact tourism activity has upon them. Following a review of several approaches, the decision was made to use a number of them. This included a qualitative grounded theory methodology which would be most appropriate for the purpose of this study.

The primary qualitative fieldwork within this study was carried out by conducting informal semi structured interviews with stakeholders of the study area, County Clare. Interviews were also conducted with those who have responsibility for the destinations tourism management. According to Denscombe (2003: 167) the semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to be flexible in terms of the order on which the topics are discussed. Perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on issues raised by the researcher. In addition to the interviews, several related conferences, training events and meetings were attended throughout Ireland and internationally. This ensured the study benefitted from the most up to date information.

#### **4.8 Key stakeholder interviews**

The aim of the qualitative research was to gain insight on the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare. The semi-structured interviews were conducted following the analysis of the surveys which identified a number of issues to be raised in the interviews. These provided a deeper understanding of stakeholder views as well as realities of the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland. The interview approach taken facilitated the depth of inquiry required; it contained open-ended questions, allowing the interviewee to elaborate on their particular point of interest. Advantage of this style of interview is that there is flexibility. This ensures the interview unfolds in a conversational manner offering both participants the chance to explore issues they feel important (Clifford and Valentine, 2003; Skinner, 2006). This method does not offer a route to 'truth' but an insight into what people think (Clifford and Valentine, 2003). Valentine (1997) maintains the aim of an interview is not to be representative but to understand how individual people experience and make sense of the issue in discussion. Consequently, these assertions uphold the relevance of utilising semi-structured interviews in an investigation of stakeholder insight. Therefore were particularly influential in this methodological choice.

This preparation of draft informal strategic open ended questions was required. These were designed around various categories of the framework to examine the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland. The draft allowed time to assess the suitability of the questions to retrieve the data necessary, also to configure how to probe the interviewees for more in depth viewpoints on particular areas. Much preparation was involved so that the interview would be carried out in a specific manner. Specific skills had to be developed for instance the probing techniques, the non-verbal communication and the listening.

The initial source of stakeholders was selected through those who co-operate with the RTA of the study area. Some were chosen as a result of their expert knowledge on the subject of tourism management. This was beneficial as there was no need to explain various aspects and concepts although occasionally clarification had to be made. A phone call to each of the stakeholders organisations identified the most appropriate person at managerial level to speak to. This correspondence was followed by an email if requested. The email explained the aim of the research, outlined the subject of

discussion and promised anonymity of responses. A phone call followed the email to arrange a date for the interview at a time convenient for the stakeholder. This process was mainly needed for the large organisations. Securing interviews with elite members of a tourism organisation is a problem reflected in the work of Marshall and Rossman (1995) as well as Sarantakos (1997). Additional stakeholders were selected using the snowballing technique in that one participant helped recruit another. Not only did this effect help amplify the sample size but to overcome difficulties regarding the willingness of stakeholder participation.

Improved measurement validity in the study was achieved via face-to-face interviews. This enabled the researcher to instantly verify any comments which otherwise might be misunderstood or misinterpreted if written. The style of interview proved particularly useful to allow further insight of opinion. When conducting the interviews, ample time for the interviewees to respond had to be given. Providing a prolonged silence between questions allowed them to respond further or develop their answer.

Each interview shared principal commonalities as it attempted to acquire the stakeholder's views and opinions. Sustainable management of tourism aspects were discussed in light of the participant's experience of various attributes implemented by their organisation. On the commencement of the interviews, the initial discussions yielded a bounty of ideas that were not previously considered. As a result, the interview questions had to be revised to include the new ideas. A copy of the interview questions can be found in Appendix L.

The interview data was collected by means of a digital dictaphone used with consent. The dictaphone permitting absolute conversational interaction with the participant rather than feeling the pressure of note taking (Valentine, 1997). The average interview lasted for an approximate duration of thirty minutes. These were then uploaded to the computer for back up and transcribed. With the various accents, transcription software unfortunately could not be used to facilitate the retrieval and analysis of the data. Although the research produced a wealth of data, it was well structured and not of an unmanageable size.

The interviews were completed by the end of April 2011 in order to avoid the summer season. The timing was carefully chosen to allow the stakeholders to set aside time. Fortunately, the planning and preparation paid off. However the researcher could have continued interviewing due to obtaining additional contacts through the ongoing snowball effect. Most importantly, the sample was sufficient.

#### **4.8.1 Sampling and selection for interviews**

The sample destination to conduct the interviews was chosen in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland (NTDA). The difficulty in choosing the sample frame rested with which stakeholders constitute the tourism industry in a destination and could contribute meaningfully to the research aims. Therefore the sampling and selection was refined for the key tourism stakeholders.

To explore the stakeholder's perception it is primarily essential to define and subsequently identify them first. For the purpose of this research, stakeholders are defined as those people or organisations that are directly involved or affected by the development of tourism within the priority destination investigated in Ireland. The key stakeholders in sustainable tourism (Figure 2.2) according to Swarbrooke (2000) were addressed in their segments.

An ideal or wholly representative dataset as indicated by Godfrey (1998) would comprise of a comprehensive examination of every stakeholder. It is neither possible nor practical to interview an entire population and is agreed upon by Clifford and Valentine (2003). This research examined a range of key tourism stakeholders (22) from fundamentally different backgrounds within the chosen study area.

#### **4.8.2 Analysis of the interviews**

The transcribing of the interviews was followed by a thematic analysis of the key issues for each of the interview questions. The interviews were analysed by identifying common themes with the aid of Microsoft Excel where the frequency of each idea was tallied and summarised. The data analysis stage is to contribute to the research aims and objectives. Furthermore, it is to create patterns and meanings.

The analysis of the data retrieved in the interviews was based on some of the principles employed by grounded theory. Grounded theory seeks to understand behaviour by collecting real-world observations to analyse the dominant processes in the social scene under investigation with the aim of developing theories and theoretical propositions (Gillis and Jackson, 2002). Once the thematic analysis had been carried out with the key issues apparent, comparison began which was constant throughout the research process. Comparison was carried out with the interviews and its relevance with the theory used to build the framework. This was then followed by the writing up stage which helped clarify the findings.

#### **4.9 Research strengths and limitations**

There were several strengths and limitations to the research approach and methods utilised. Having decided a quantitative survey was the best method for part of the research, it is possible that the addition of more open-ended questions could have been added. This may have contributed to understanding the thought processes and reasons behind certain demands of the topic in question. However the objective was still fulfilled. It is considered that the chosen research strategy combined the best opportunity for measuring the demand for sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism destinations.

The strength of utilising an electronic mail survey minimised the possibility for bias. The surveys sampling possibly benefitted through the attractive design and the pleasant approach taken with the data collection. Furthermore, the sponsorship obtained which enabled incentivisation and how it was possible to complete the survey at home was a significant advantage.

It is inevitable to have limitations with research. The limitation of this research is not having the resources to actually implement the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. It would be valuable to test the models practicality and effectiveness of the approach for implementation. Furthermore, a technological limitation was the transcribing. It was particularly time consuming as they had to be transcribed individually. The transcription software failed in accuracy to process the various accents from the interviews.

Credibility was enhanced in this research through the constant comparison of the international literature and the data analysed. Transferability was achieved by utilising the same interview for each of the key stakeholders and inputting the data into a thematic analysis. The true transferability of the model will only be possible through its implementation at a tourism destination.

The dependability of this study is seen through the transparency of the research process. Being able to determine which raw data was used to reach the corresponding conclusions. This was also achieved from the records of the data collection and analysis procedure. Conformability relates to the process of checking interpretations and conclusions for research bias. The integrative approach complementarily was employed in the research to ensure validity.

#### **4.10 Ethics**

Ethics are predominantly important when carrying out research that involves people. It was considered unnecessary to have the surveys reviewed by an ethics committee. Reason being that Fáilte Ireland (NTDA) and the supervisor both reviewed and approved the survey. The researcher implemented proper ethical standards throughout the research. Proper identification of the researcher and the study topic was provided throughout each phase of the study and to every respondent. There was a clear direction at the outset of the type of questions that would be asked. The opportunity to participate was through free and informed consent. The respondents were allowed the right to privacy, to refuse answering questions or withdraw from the research at any time.

When referring to the electronic mail surveys throughout the analysis, they were usually generalised by being either a holidaymaker or tourism business response. Permission was obtained from all the key stakeholders to record the interviews. When referring to the key stakeholders throughout the analysis, the interviewees were simply referred to by the category that fits the remit of their organisation and coding in the form of a letter and number. For example:

‘One that helps the visitor numbers, you can’t ignore revenue, revenue has to be there if your going to be successful...,’ Respondent A05 (Retailer).

The manner in which tourism management is conducted can be controversial and the research required honest opinions. As a corollary it was important that confidentiality

was a key trait of the research, particularly to obtain open discussion and opinions of the key stakeholders. With this in mind, anonymity was provided, the name and location of the key stakeholders interviewed were protected. Primarily this was due to the inclusion of those in tourism management positions for the study area.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter has identified the combination of research methods undertaken for this research and the reason for selection. The comprehensive literature review provided the basis for empirical progression. However, by incorporating qualitative and quantitative methods complementarily, it was possible to generate knowledge specific to the research aim and objectives. Furthermore, the outcome of the research demonstrates how both methods were employed in addition to theory to contribute new knowledge at the practical applied level by developing a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The following two chapters present the results and discussion from applying the research methods. Chapter five is based on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. This is followed by chapter six which offers results on the sustainable management of a tourism destination (County Clare).



# DEMAND FOR AND SUPPLY OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN IRELAND

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## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the empirical results pertaining to the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. Principally the analysis addresses the first aim of the thesis:

1. Assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland.

In order to achieve this aim, it was necessary to focus the analysis according to the following objectives:

- a) Assess the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland.
- b) Assess the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare.

In order to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland, a theoretical framework was designed and utilised (Table 5.1). The framework embedded the principal themes identified from theory on the sustainable management of tourism (Swarbrooke, 2000; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; UNWTO, 2007; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; GSTC, 2008, 2012). The theoretical framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism was divided into two sections.

The first section of the framework (5.2) has been designed to assess the demand for sustainable tourism. The first baseline findings on the demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland are systematically discussed according to the layout of the framework. Subsequently, the second section (5.3) concentrates on the supply of sustainable tourism. For the assessment of the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland, there is a focus on County Clare.

**Table 5.1** A framework to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism

5.2 Assess the Demand for Sustainable Tourism	5.3 Assess the Supply of Sustainable Tourism
5.2.1 Understanding of sustainable tourism 5.2.2 Demand for sustainable tourism 5.2.3 Demanding for support to convert to sustainable tourism 5.2.4 Demand for resources to implement sustainable tourism 5.2.5 Demand to incorporate the aims of sustainable tourism Social and Economic aims Economic Viability Local Prosperity Employment Quality Social Equity Cultural Heritage Aims Visitor Fulfilment Local Control Community Wellbeing Cultural Richness Environmental aims Physical Integrity Biological Diversity Resource Efficiency Environmental Purity 5.2.6 Awareness of sustainable tourism certification 5.2.7 Recognition of tourism certification labels 5.2.8 Demand for one sustainable tourism certification label 5.2.9 Potential greenwashing associated with certification claims 5.2.10 Verification by an independent third party 5.2.11 Demand for sustainable tourism certified products and services 5.2.12 Pay more for a sustainable tourism certified product or service 5.2.13 Demand for sustainable tourism certification in Ireland	5.3.1 Demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism 5.3.2 Sustainable Tourism Certified Business 5.3.3 Sustainable Management System (SMS) 5.3.4 Supply of training on sustainable management 5.3.5 Training in Sustainable Tourism 5.3.6 Compliancy with legislation and regulations 5.3.7 Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure 5.3.8 Information and interpretation is provided 5.3.9 Promotional materials are accurate and complete 5.3.10 Customer satisfaction measured, corrective action taken 5.3.11 Stakeholder, Public Participation and Partnerships 5.3.12 Maximise social and economic benefits to the local community 5.3.13 Support initiatives for community development 5.3.14 Local residents employed and training offered 5.3.15 Equitable in hiring women and local minorities 5.3.16 Legal protection of employees is respected 5.3.17 Implement a policy against commercial exploitation 5.3.18 Local and fair-trade services and goods are purchased 5.3.19 Support local entrepreneurs 5.3.20 Code of conduct for activities in local communities 5.3.21 Basic services to neighbouring communities 5.3.22 Benefits to Cultural Heritage 5.3.23 Code of behaviour for culturally and historically sensitive sites 5.3.24 Contribute to the protection of local properties and sites 5.3.25 Use elements of local art/architecture/cultural heritage 5.3.26 Protection of historical and archaeological artefacts 5.3.27 Benefits to the Environment 5.3.28 Conserving resources 5.3.29 Reducing pollution 5.3.30 Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes

Source: Adapted from (Swarbrooke, 2000; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; UNWTO, 2007; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; GSTC, 2008, 2012).

Throughout the discussion of the findings, the empirical data is analysed to draw results of the issues that were raised throughout the literature. The analysis is embedded in current theory through the use of the framework. The identification of the supply of sustainable tourism allows for a contrast with the demand and to identify if there are gaps in the management. The structure of this chapter is chronologically illustrated within the framework.

## 5.2 The demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland

If the tourism industry is to become more sustainable, research needs to identify the demand for sustainable tourism. There is a gap in knowledge on the demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland. To bridge this gap, the thesis drew from empirical data generated from the surveys completed by 1356 domestic and international holidaymakers to Ireland. In addition to the responses obtained through the survey completed by 369 national tourism businesses.

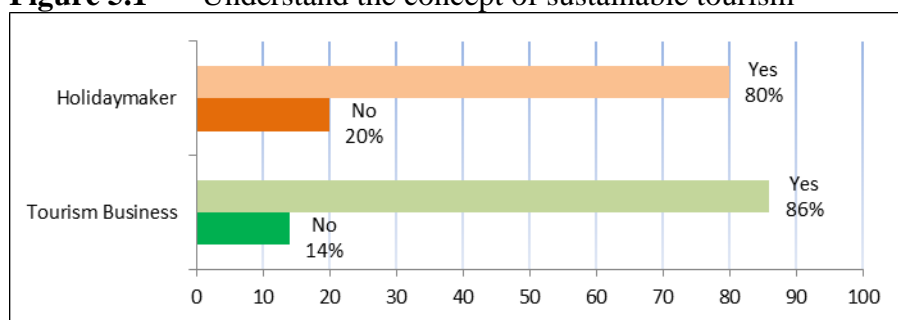
This section of the framework (5.2) initiates by determining if the sample of tourism businesses and holidaymakers understand sustainable tourism. It discusses the first baseline findings on the demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland. Furthermore, it

identifies the tourism business demand for support to convert to sustainable tourism. The demand for resources to aid in the implementation of sustainable tourism is examined. There is an examination of the demand to incorporate the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism in the management of the Irish tourism industry. Sustainable tourism certification which is a key tool in the sustainable management of tourism has been mapped upon eight of the assessment indicators (5.2.6 - 5.2.11). The depth of focus on assessing this aspect is due to the significance certification has as a regulatory instrument. Such instruments provide the foundation of sustainability in tourism (Buckley, 2012). These baseline findings will be of particular importance to the Irish tourism industry.

### 5.2.1 Understanding of sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism must be understood before it is supported or implemented. Therefore assessing stakeholders understanding of sustainable tourism is considered necessary (Wilson, Fesenmaier and Van Es, 2001; Byrd and Cardenas, 2007). By understanding sustainable tourism, it allows the stakeholders to have informed participation (Farrell and Twining-Ward, 2004; Byrd, 2007; Byrd, Cárdenas and Greenwood, 2008). The majority of holidaymakers (80%) and tourism businesses (86%) indicated they understand the concept of sustainable tourism (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1** Understand the concept of sustainable tourism



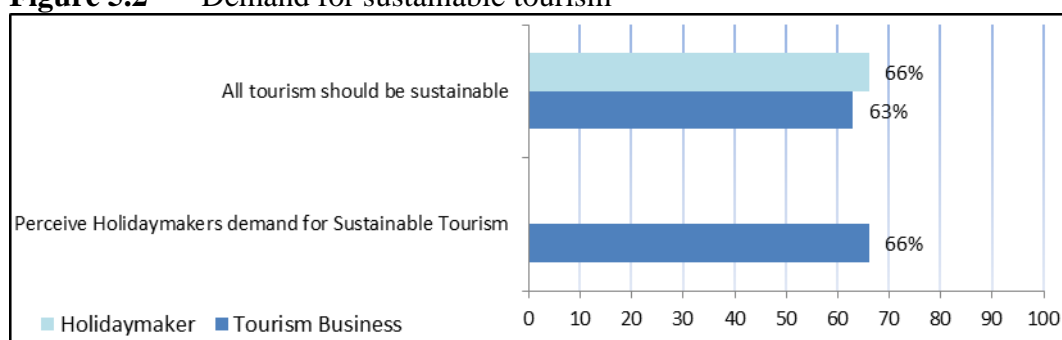
A Fáilte Ireland report (2009) on 'Exploring the attitudes of holidaymakers towards landscape and natural environment' indicated 70% were aware of one of the terms 'green tourism' 'eco tourism' 'sustainable tourism'. The findings from this study support those of Fáilte Ireland and found a possible increase in understanding since 2009. This perhaps is due to the term becoming much more prevalent. As the majority of holidaymakers and tourism businesses understand the concept of sustainable tourism,

it should also them to have informed participation in the sustainable management of tourism.

### 5.2.2 Demand for sustainable tourism

It is necessary for businesses and destinations operating in tourism to respond to the demands of the tourism market. An increasing demand for responsible products has been recognised (Chafe and Honey, 2005; SNV, 2009; Mil-Homens, 2011). A major driving force behind sustainable tourism is the consumers. As sustainable tourism is a market choice, without the consumer there can be no sustainable tourism business (Tjolle, 2008). Therefore, the assessment sought to determine if the sample of holidaymakers and tourism businesses think that all tourism should be sustainable. It then examined if the tourism businesses perceive holidaymakers demand for sustainable tourism. Without a demand, there would be no pressure for tourism businesses to implement sustainable management practices.

**Figure 5.2** Demand for sustainable tourism



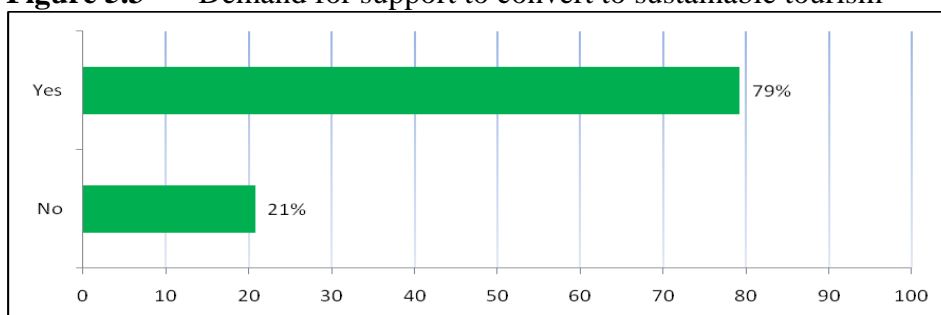
This research found that a similar percentage of the holidaymakers (66%) and tourism businesses (63%) think that all tourism should be sustainable. Furthermore the tourism businesses perceive that (66%) of the holidaymakers demand sustainable tourism. This corresponds exactly to the expressed demand from the holidaymakers. This indicates that the tourism businesses have an understanding of their market and may be informed enough to make the decision to progress toward the sustainable management of tourism. A suggested reason for popularity in demand is due to individuals, businesses and organisations joining together with authorities and local communities to support and promote responsible products and services (Bremner, 2009). Now that a demand for sustainable tourism from both the tourism businesses and holidaymakers has been

identified, the next step was to assess the demand for support to convert to sustainable tourism.

### 5.2.3 Demand for support to convert to sustainable tourism

If the tourism industry is to alter management practices to the demand identified, the tourism businesses may require support to convert to sustainable tourism. The number of organisations converting to sustainable tourism has increased due to the demand by conscientious consumers (SNV, 2009). This will benefit the future of the industry and fulfil the unmet demand (Tearfund, 2000). The analysis identified the majority of the sample of Irish tourism businesses (79%) demand support to convert to sustainable tourism.

**Figure 5.3** Demand for support to convert to sustainable tourism

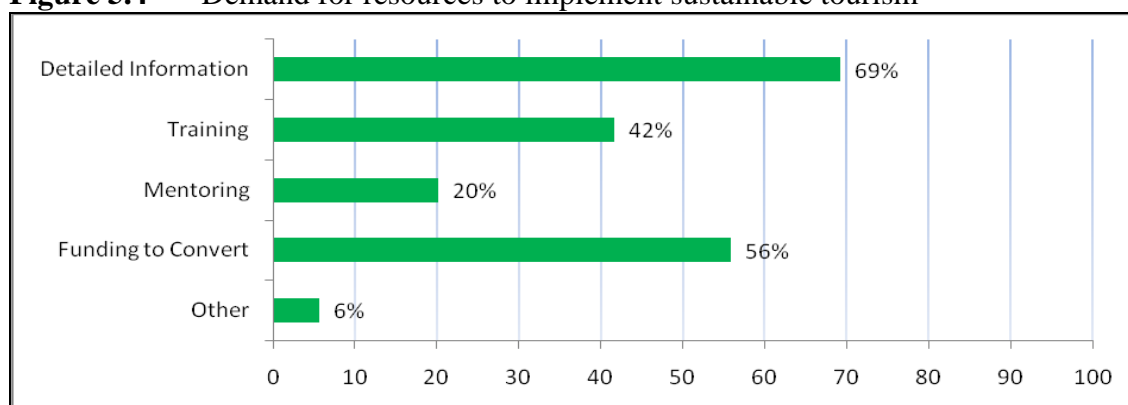


The demand for support to convert to sustainable tourism may point to an important role from the NTDA, RTA, DMOs and tourism management organisations to support the conversion. Furthermore, for the implementation of sustainable tourism, the tourism businesses may require resources such as detailed information, training, mentoring and funding.

### 5.2.4 Demand for resources to implement sustainable tourism

For the tourism industry to implement sustainable tourism, the tourism businesses may require various resources. It has been identified that small businesses generally lack the resources to act individually on issues such as sustainability (Le, Hollenhorst, Harris, McLaughlin and Shook, 2006). With greater awareness of issues, the demand for more information is growing (Dodds and Joppe, 2008; Miller et al., 2010). This has been reflected in the findings as the sample of Irish tourism businesses (69%) demand detailed information.

**Figure 5.4** Demand for resources to implement sustainable tourism



The study of Miller et al. (2010) indicated that change will need to be orchestrated by going beyond the provision of information (Collins, Thomas, Willis and Wilsdon, 2003). Funding to convert may be required as it was demanded (56%) by the tourism businesses, which signified that they perceive costs will be incurred to implement sustainable tourism. By undertaking training, the industry would be educated for a more sustainable future, (42%) indicated a demand for training. The 'other' answer contained responses suggesting marketing support of sustainable initiatives. Overall, the businesses demanded resources to support the implementation of sustainable tourism. This finding has important ramifications for those managing the tourism industry. It is recommended that a core commitment is given by the NTDA, Regional Tourism Authorities (RTA), LEADER and the educational bodies to provide training and resources to the Irish tourism businesses in the conversion to sustainable tourism.

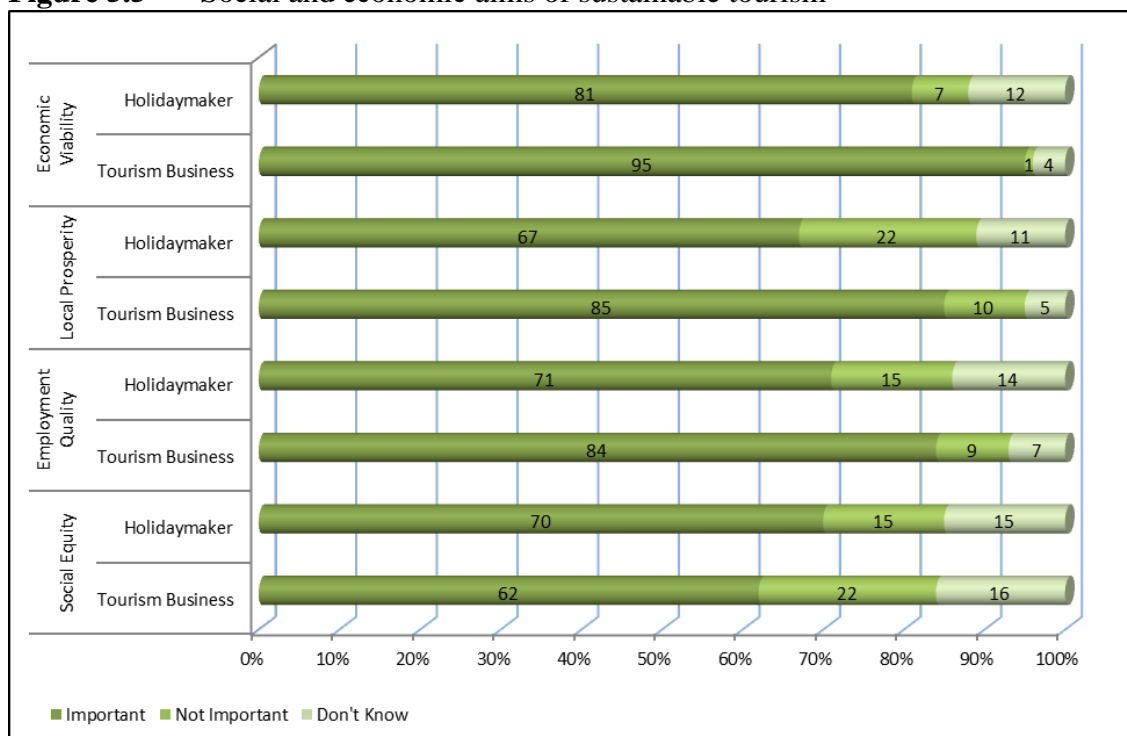
### **5.2.5 Demand to incorporate the aims of sustainable tourism**

Assessing the demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland would be incomplete without taking into account the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism. Movement toward these aims is a well-established objective in Europe (Flanagan et al., 2007). The research investigated whether tourism businesses and holidaymakers express a demand to incorporate the aims of sustainable tourism in the management of the Irish tourism industry. For sustainable tourism to be successful, the interrelationship between the triple bottom line aspects must be acknowledged (Swarbrooke, 1999; Byrd, Cárdenas and Greenwood, 2008). The aims are segmented according to the headings social and economic, cultural heritage and environmental.

## Social and economic aims of sustainable tourism

The twelve aims of sustainable tourism should be included for the scope of the effective sustainable management of tourism (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Flanagan et al., 2007). The study determined if the sample of holidaymakers and national tourism businesses expressed demand for social and economic aims to be incorporated in the management of tourism in Ireland.

**Figure 5.5** Social and economic aims of sustainable tourism



The findings identified that the tourism businesses and holidaymakers regard social and economic aims as important enough to be incorporated in the management of tourism in Ireland. In particular, economic viability prevailed as most ‘important’ by the tourism businesses (95%) possibly due to their operating primarily for economic gain. After all, economic benefits are usually the general driving force to serve tourists and have tourism development (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill, 2008). In addition, tourism has a major economic significance for an area (Padure and Turtureanu, 2005).

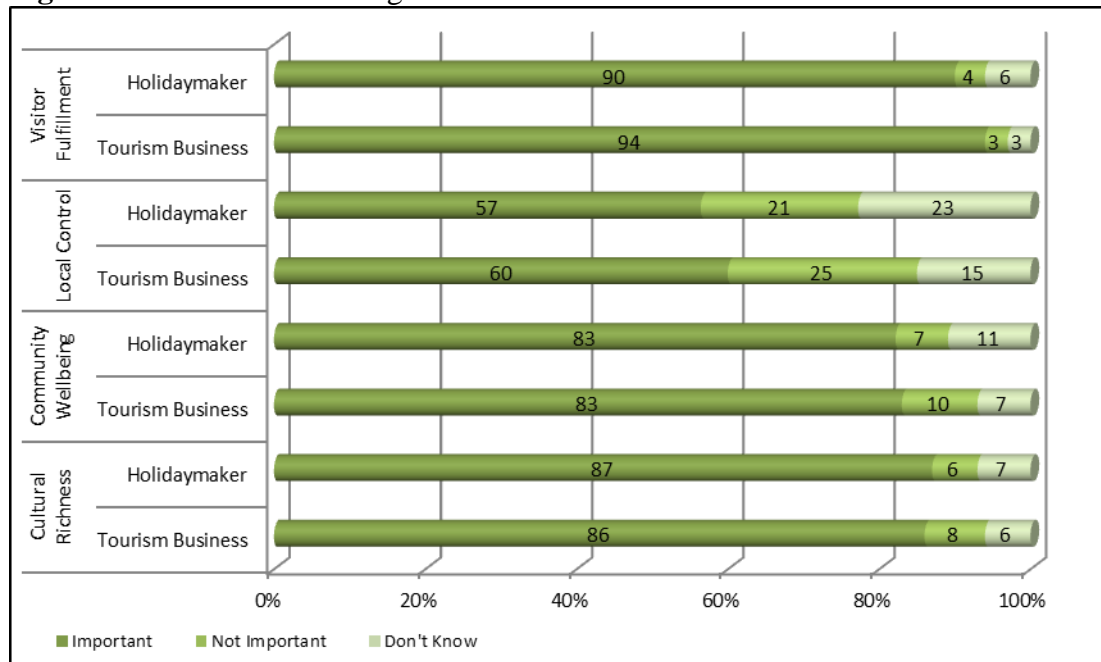
Local prosperity was regarded more important by tourism businesses (85%) than the holidaymakers (67%). Likewise with employment quality. It is encouraging that the tourism businesses regard employment quality with such importance. In the principles of sustainable tourism development, tourism should provide quality employment to its

community and establish a linkage between the local businesses and tourism (Jamieson and Noble, 2000). Social equity, a principle of Local Agenda 21 was also regarded as important. The findings have identified the need for these aims to be incorporated in the management of tourism in Ireland. After all, they aid in maximising social and economic benefits to the local community.

### Cultural heritage aims of sustainable tourism

Culture heritage aspect of sustainable tourism has been gaining importance recently not only for economic gains but due to more sustainable approaches. A reason for this growth in concern is possibly due to the prediction made by the UNWTO (2009) that cultural tourism will be one of the five key tourism markets of the future. It is also due to factors such as globalisation, social media explosion and related concerns over cultural impacts and current rate of degradation in other industries not related to tourism. The growth in cultural tourism will present an increasing challenge in terms of management to cultural sites (EU, 1998; MFA, 1999; NWHO, 1999). This asserts the need to incorporate the cultural heritage aims to the management of tourism.

**Figure 5.6** Cultural heritage aims of sustainable tourism



From the twelve aims, visitor fulfilment is regarded the most important by both the holidaymakers (90%) and tourism businesses (94%). This is about meeting visitor's needs and providing opportunities (UNEP and WTO, 2005). On the other hand, local control was the weakest of the twelve aims yet the demand for its incorporation in the



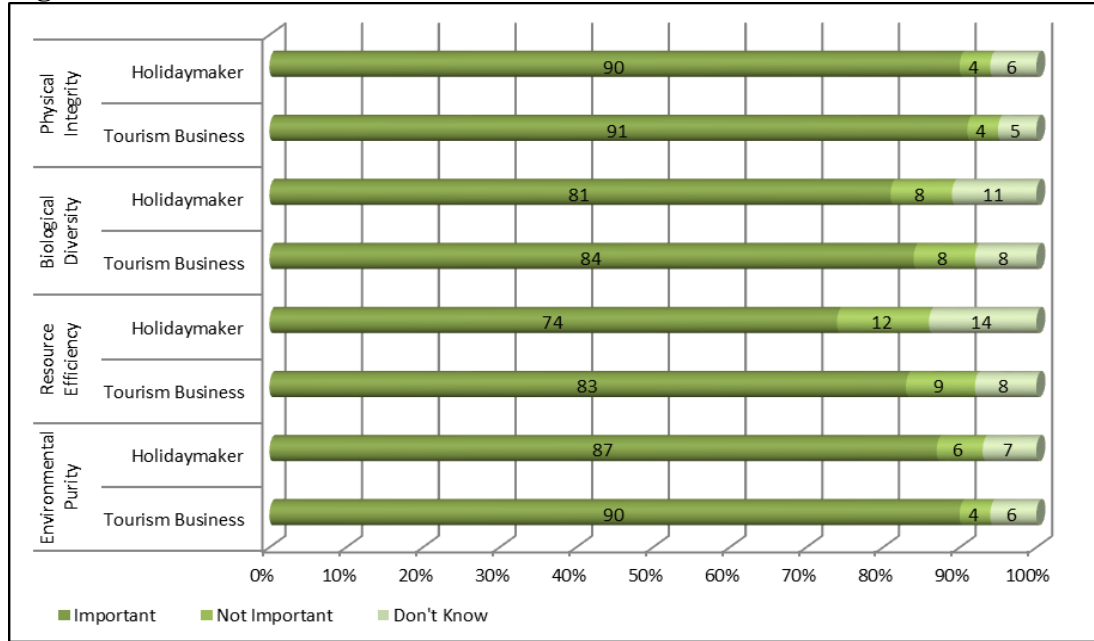
management of the industry is still apparent. Local control through public participation is seen as a method to improve the image and professional basis of tourism management and planning (Pearce, Moscardo and Ross, 1996; Tosun, 2004). It was agreed by Local Agenda 21 that the best way to achieve sustainable development was from a local level.

The tourism industry is a critical component in fostering global support for community well-being (Trau and Bushell, 2008). Community wellbeing is fundamental as it attempts to get the balance right in the volume, timing and location of visits. It was regarded important by an equal percentage of the respondents (83%). Through working with the communities, it also aids in cultural richness, another aim the majority of holidaymakers and tourism businesses regarded important. As cultural heritage is fragile, it may be easily damaged if not taken care of (IFT, UNESCO, 2007). It is important that this is carried out in conjunction with the local community. This analysis has indicated a high level of importance for the cultural heritage aims of sustainable tourism to be incorporated to the management of the Irish tourism industry. Indeed, the integration of these aims would be incomplete without consideration for the environment.

### **Environmental aims of sustainable tourism**

The sustainable management of tourism requires the necessary consideration of the environment. Tourism produces direct and indirect impacts on the environment and natural resources. These are derived from atmospheric emissions, solid and liquid wastes, the consumption of water, energy and materials (Buckley and Araujo, 1997; Cummings, 1997; Gossling, 2000, 2002; Chan and Lam, 2003; Aall, 2011; Charara, Cashman, Bonnell and Gehr, 2011; Smerecnik and Andersen, 2011; Buckley, 2012). As a result, the management of the physical integrity, biological diversity, resource efficiency and environmental purity is fundamental to the management of Ireland's desired natural aspects.

**Figure 5.7** Environmental aims of sustainable tourism



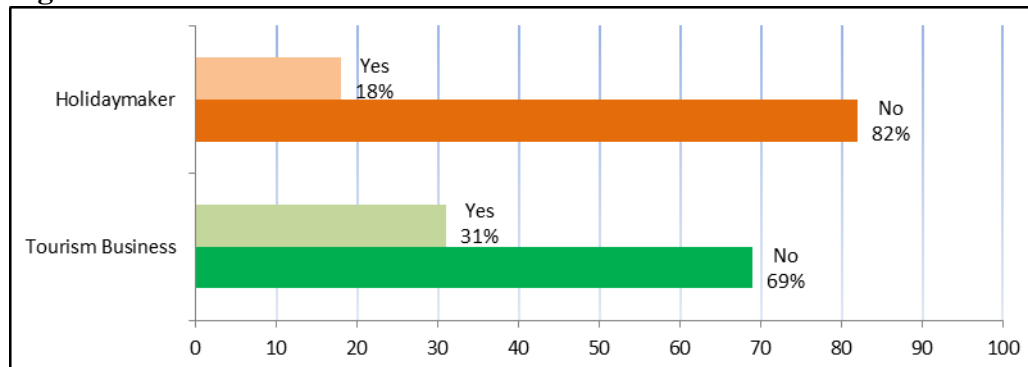
The sample of holidaymakers and tourism businesses indicate a high level of importance for the environmental aims to be incorporated to the management of tourism in Ireland. Of the four aims, there was no significant gap of variance in opinion. Without proper management and the integration of these aims, the tourism industry may result in the absence of an attractive environment. Without this, there would be little tourism (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). The findings show that there was no major difference among the social and economic, cultural heritage and environmental aims. They were all acknowledged as important enough to be incorporated into the sustainable management of the Irish tourism industry. They will need to be integrated into the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. A key tool to achieve this for the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland would be through the implementation of sustainable tourism certification. The awareness of certification among the holidaymakers and tourism businesses of Ireland has not yet been established.

#### 5.2.6 Awareness of sustainable tourism certification

Certification will have a vital part to play in the conversion to the sustainable management of tourism. Sustainable tourism certification has been established as an effective tool for the sustainable management of tourism (Honey, 2002; Bien, 2007). It provides a framework for education, measurement and management, as well as recognition from achieving certification. For certification to be influential, it has to be

recognised amongst the tourism industry. Low levels of awareness of certification is a factor which hinders the success of certification programs (Hamele, 2002; Hansen, 2007). This lack of awareness has also been attributed as a barrier to consumer demand (Carlsen et al., 2001; Medina, 2005; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Proto et al., 2007; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). The study examined the level of awareness of sustainable tourism certification amongst the samples of holidaymakers and of national tourism businesses.

**Figure 5.8** Awareness of sustainable tourism certification















The level of awareness of sustainable tourism certification was low, more so from the holidaymakers (18%) than the tourism businesses (31%). This low level of awareness could be partially due to ineffective marketing (Font, 2001; Honey, 2002). The greater the awareness, the demand for sustainable tourism products and services may grow (Dodds and Joppe, 2008). It was taken into consideration that the level of awareness of sustainable tourism certification may be further determined by providing the opportunity to visually identify tourism certification labels.

### 5.2.7 Recognition of tourism certification labels

Through the recognition of tourism certification labels the consumer may distinguish products and services that have implemented responsible practice. The more widespread and easily recognised a label is, the more consumers will use it (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). It is perceived that international labels will be more useful than the localised due to being universally recognised (Buckley, 2002; Font, 2002; Krause, 2005). Even though the study identified the awareness of sustainable tourism certification was low, the findings to follow allow for a deeper analysis due to the opportunity to visually identify tourism certification labels.

**Table 5.2** Recognition of tourism certification labels

						
<b>Holidaymaker</b>	12%	12%	28%	6%	77%	10%
<b>Tourism Business</b>	13%	29%	42%	8%	90%	14%
						
<b>Holidaymaker</b>	10%	7%	19%	9%	4%	27%
<b>Tourism Business</b>	6%	4%	35%	6%	6%	25%

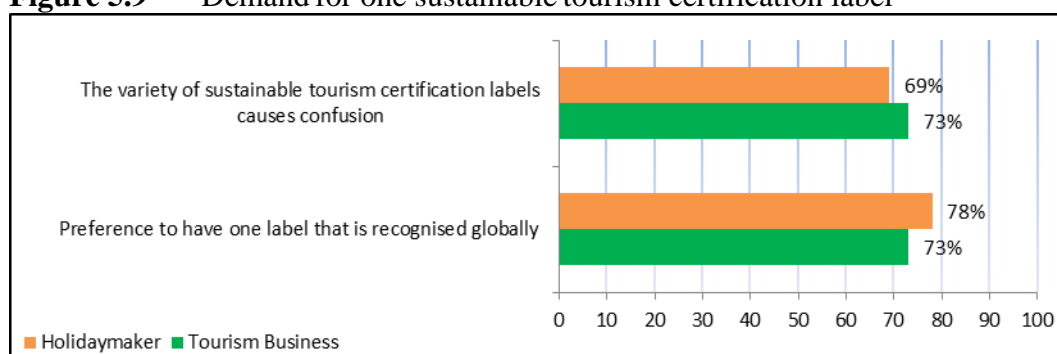
The international labels received a greater level of recognition. The findings support that an effectively marketed and international label may be more universally identifiable (Buckley, 2002; Font, 2002) in contrast to those local and national. For example holidaymaker recognition of the local Greenbox eco label was recognised by (4%), the national Green Hospitality Award (12%) and the international Fairtrade (77%). These findings are similar to those of the Fairtrade Foundation (2013) who identified that 78% of consumers in the UK recognise the Fairtrade label. The low level of awareness of the majority of labels however supports the theory that current certification labels are not sufficiently powerful to influence customer choice (Font and Wood, 2007; Lorenzini, Calzati, Giudici, 2011). For the benefit of the tourism industry, it may be ideal if a consensus was formed to choose one credible effectively marketed international sustainable tourism certification label that would gain more awareness.

### 5.2.8 Demand for one sustainable tourism certification label

It is important for the tourism industry to endorse a sustainable tourism certification label recognised by all the tourism stakeholders. With over 100 tourism certification labels, many overlap in sector and geographical scope (Font and Buckley, 2001; Medina, 2005; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). The plethora of labels causes stakeholder confusion and is a factor that hinders the success of certification (Hansen, 2007; Bowen and Clarke, 2009). Thus impeding effective functioning (Sharpley 2001; Honey and Steward, 2002; Sanabria, 2002; Eichhorn et al., 2008). The abundance of certification labels may in fact generate confusion to the extent that they are eventually ignored (Morris, Hastak and Mazis, 1995; Brown et al., 1997; Diamantis, 1998;

Buckley, 2002). This confusion has also been recognised as a barrier to consumer demand (Carlsen et al., 2001; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Proto et al., 2007; Jarvis, Weeden, and Simcock, 2010). This study explored the holidaymakers and tourism business preference in relation to this issue.

**Figure 5.9** Demand for one sustainable tourism certification label



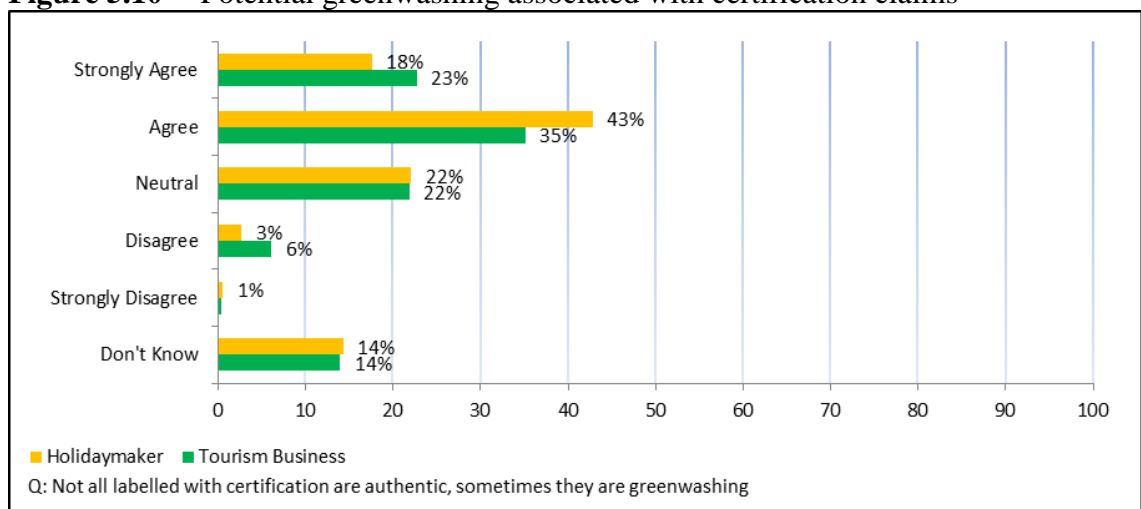
Both the holidaymakers (69%) and tourism businesses (73%) agree the variety of sustainable tourism certification labels cause confusion. This finding is consistent with theory (Honey and Steward, 2002; Hansen, 2007; Bowen and Clarke, 2009; Weeden, and Simcock, 2010). Furthermore, they indicated a preference for one certification label that is recognised globally. Thus, the research agrees with Font (2010) that current world efforts should be towards reducing the number of labels and consolidating standards.

It is recommended that the NTDA promotes a globally recognised accredited certification label. The marketing of one would penetrate more awareness and eliminate confusion. However, concern was expressed by Goodwin (2010) over the implementation of an international label as it may undermine the effectiveness of strong national schemes. This may be combatted by utilising accredited programs, this will eradicate the view that the label means less (Font and Buckley, 2001; Font; 2002; Robbins, 2008; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). The GSTC will play a significant role in the future to eliminate confusion and encourage the industry and state tourism authorities to validate their certification labels. Central to the GSTC process is independent third party verification. This has been identified in the literature (Font, 2001; Bien, 2006) to be essential if certification is to be meaningful and prevent greenwashing.

### 5.2.9 Potential greenwashing associated with certification claims

It is important that sustainable tourism certification is reliable and meaningful. Certification programs strive toward high quality standards (Medina, 2005; Eichhorn et al., 2008; Mil-Homens, 2011) yet have been hurt by a lack of credibility (Honey, 2002; Mil-Homens, 2011). According to Buckley (2002) the most basic test of a tourism certification program is whether it is accepted by tourists as meaningful and reliable. The study examined if the holidaymakers and tourism businesses regard there to be potential greenwashing associated with certification claims.

**Figure 5.10** Potential greenwashing associated with certification claims

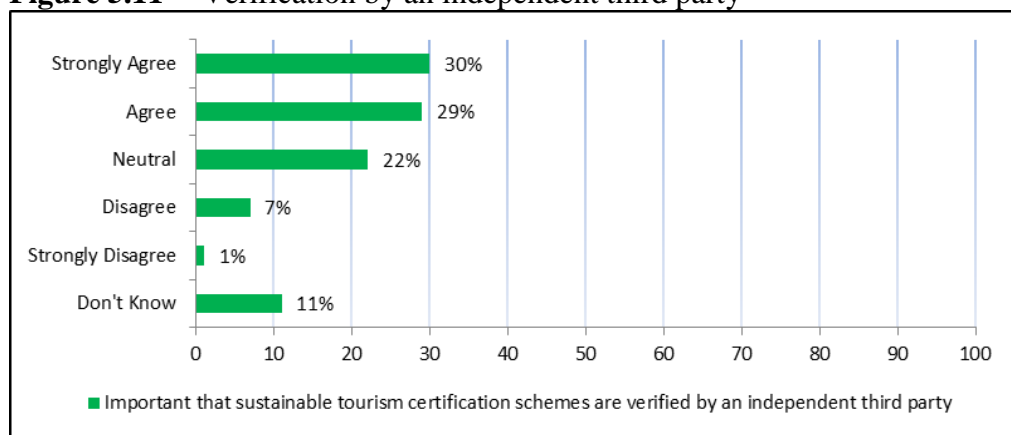


A concern of greenwashing associated with certification claims was identified. Over half of the holidaymakers (61%) and tourism businesses (58%) ‘strongly agree/agree’ that not all labelled with certification are authentic and sometimes they are greenwashing. These findings attest certification has been hurt by a lack of credibility (Honey, 2002; Mil-Homens, 2011). Certification without credibility does not have a market. It will not convince the consumers and it will not demonstrate anything (Toth, 2000; Font, 2001; Bien, 2006; Hansen, 2007). To combat potential greenwashing associated with certification claims, it is important to endorse credible programs that are verified by an independent third party. Otherwise the program will not be adequate and may do more harm than good. The concern of false claims indicates that the GSTC third party verification has an important role to ensure credibility.

### 5.2.10 Verification by an independent third party

The implementation of certification that has been verified by an independent third party is vital to ensure credibility. The concern of certification credibility and the need for third party verification arose due to the proliferation of labels (Toth, 2000; Font, 2002). The verification assures the certified product or service conforms to specific requirements (Toth, 2000; Mil-Homens, 2011). According to Font (2001) and Mil-Homens (2011), a certified organisation that has been verified by an independent third party will obtain more recognition.

**Figure 5.11** Verification by an independent third party

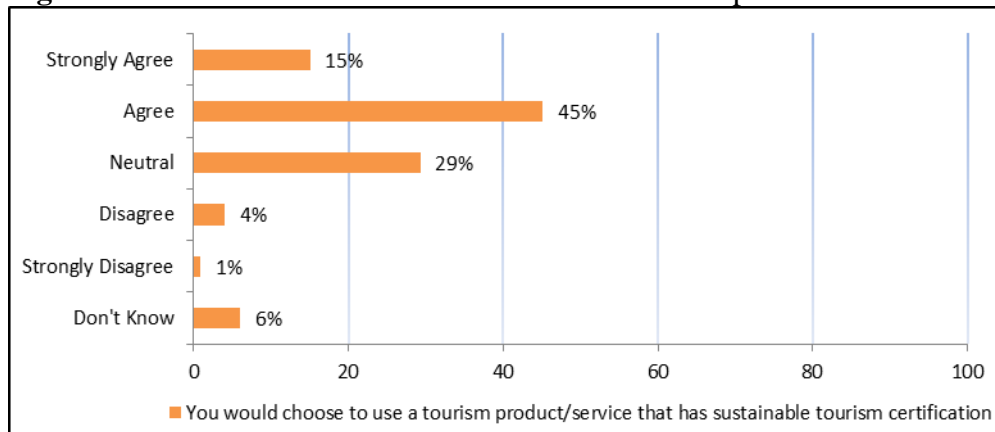


The tourism businesses (59%) agreed that it is important to have certification verified by an independent third party. It is essential if certification is to be meaningful and to prevent greenwashing (Font, 2001; Bien, 2006). The findings are a positive indication of how tourism businesses demand credibility. If stakeholders were satisfied with any claim to certification, the concept may become diluted (Conroy, 2007). These findings verify the significance of the theorists call for an international accreditation body to regulate certification programs (Font and Buckley, 2001; Font, 2002; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). The findings indicate substance to the industry demand for sustainable tourism, they not only demand sustainable tourism but would like the certification programs to be credible. Central to the GSTC is the independent third party verification which should play a significant role in the future of certification credibility and to eliminate confusion. This would ensure the product or service conforms to specific requirements.

### 5.2.11 Demand for sustainable tourism certified products and services

The supply of sustainable tourism certified products and services may develop more rapidly if a demand is evident. A practical action suggested from Miller et al. (2010) from a sustainable tourism study was the need to label the sustainability of tourism products. However the consumer demand for sustainable tourism certified products and services had been largely unknown (Honey, 2002). Theoretically there has been reference made to the barriers of consumer demand of certified products due to the plethora of labels, lack of information, lack of consumer awareness and price (Carlsen et al., 2001; Medina, 2005; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Proto et al., 2007; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). Without certification, concerned holidaymakers would have to conduct their own research on the responsible management of a product or service, involving a considerable investment of time and effort (Buckley, 2002). This research found positive indications of a holidaymaker demand for sustainable tourism certified products and services.

**Figure 5.12** Demand for sustainable tourism certified products and services



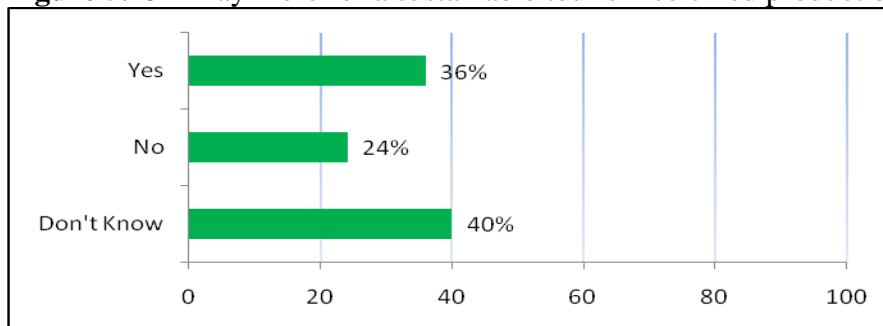
The research findings disagree with Budeanu (2007) and Buckley (2012) who stated few tourists select sustainable products specifically. The holidaymakers to Ireland are influenced by sustainable tourism certified products and services as (60%) 'strongly agree/agree' they would choose to use a tourism product or service that has sustainable tourism certification. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the tourism industry and its stakeholders to provide these products and services to fulfil the demand. Fáilte Ireland (2009) had identified that certification would become more and more important as the demand for responsible products grew. Even though demand for sustainable tourism certified products and services was identified, it is possible for this to differ depending on whether or not they have to pay more.



### 5.2.12 Pay more for a sustainable tourism certified product or service

Sustainable tourism certified products and services provide consumers with a responsible choice. It was recommended by Buckley (2002) that tourism businesses should only implement certification and make improvements to the extent of demand and consumers' willingness to pay for such improvements. The price of a certified product has been recognised as a barrier to consumer demand as it is often perceived to cost more than those that are non-certified (Carlsen et al., 2001; Medina, 2005; Reiser and Simmons, 2005; Proto et al., 2007). As a result there has been a theoretical debate regarding the issue of paying more for a sustainable tourism certified product or service. According to Tjolle (2008) savvy customers will pay a premium for a sustainable tourism certified product or service. Whereas Conaghan and Hanrahan (2010) query why a premium should be paid when there is such a plethora of certifications in existence. Furthermore, tourism businesses benefit economically due to the cost saving procedures from the implementation of certification. However Dodds and Joppe (2005) highlight that consumer's decisions is often dominated by criteria such as price.

**Figure 5.13** Pay more for a sustainable tourism certified product or service



In this study, it was established that 40% of the holidaymakers 'don't know' if they would pay more for a sustainable tourism certified product or service, yet 36% would. A similar proposition had been asked by Fáilte Ireland (2008), "Are holidaymakers willing to pay more for green alternatives?", only 20% of the respondents selected 'It's worth paying more' with 52% indicating it 'is not worth paying more'. According to Miller et al. (2010) there are tourists who are unwilling to change their behaviour and purchase sustainable tourism products.

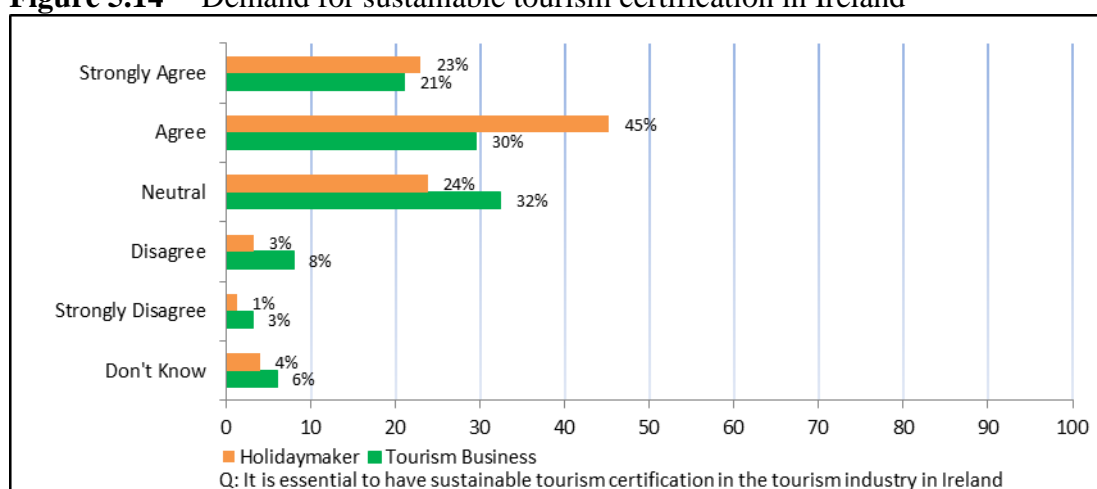
More research is needed to identify if the holidaymaker's intention is different from their purchasing behaviour. The 36% that indicated they would pay more for a certified product or service is significant considering how price conscious consumers are. The

holidaymaker willingness to pay more reiterates the potential demand for certified products and services even if there is a price difference. This demand is supported economically by the growth in for example certified Fair trade products with retail sales in the UK alone from £63 million in 2002 to £1.5 billion in ten years (Fairtrade Foundation, 2013).

### 5.2.13 Demand for sustainable tourism certification in Ireland

If there is a demand for sustainable tourism certification, the tourism industry may progress in supporting its implementation. The recognition of sustainable practice through certification has been considered the most promising of voluntary approaches (Foh, 2001). It is used to enhance the credibility of the sector (Honey, 2002; Bauckham, 2005; Bien, 2007). Research on certification in Ireland has been narrow as many studies fixated on the organic food market (Roddy et al., 1994; O'Donovan and McCarthy, 2002; Moore, 2006; Connolly, 2008). Findings specific to the demand for sustainable tourism certification in Ireland had not been established to date.

**Figure 5.14** Demand for sustainable tourism certification in Ireland



Both the holidaymakers (68%) and tourism businesses (51%) ‘strongly agree/agree’ that it is essential to have certification in the tourism industry in Ireland. The findings indicate the need for the Irish tourism sector to implement certification as a demand has been identified. This may be supported by the government considering tourism is used by many governments as a mechanism to aid the development and regeneration of economies (Page, 2003; TSG, 2007). It is important that they communicate the benefits to be gained from the implementation of certification to encourage the tourism industry

to self-regulate. Implementation of certification would aid the industry to adapt to the sustainable management of tourism.

### **5.3 The supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland (County Clare)**

A supply of sustainable tourism is important to match the demand identified. It will contribute to maintain the natural resources of which the tourism industry depends. It will further contribute to maintain or improve the integrity of the local communities affected by tourism. The supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare has been assessed by utilising the second section (5.3) of the theoretical framework (Table 5.1) to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism.

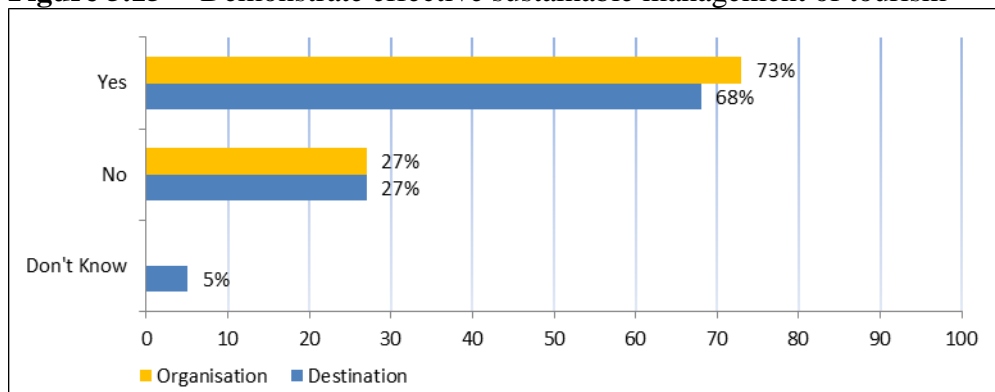
The analysis of the supply drew from data collected from interviewing a wide sample of tourism stakeholders in County Clare. The analysis also included findings from the surveys completed by the sample of national tourism businesses. Thus, it is important to note that the discussion to follow has integrated the findings from the interviews and surveys. Primarily the findings are specific to the stakeholder interviews. The findings of each indicator in question are discussed according to how the stakeholders perceive their organisation efforts are. The findings also discuss the stakeholder's opinion of the destinations efforts as a whole towards the indicator in question. The destination in this case means County Clare. The organisation and destination results are clearly presented in a table.

The discussion of the findings on the supply of sustainable tourism initiates by first establishing if the tourism stakeholders of County Clare perceive their organisation and destination demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism. This is followed with findings specific to sustainable tourism certification, sustainable management systems, training in sustainable tourism and compliancy with legislation and regulations. The research identifies if information and interpretation is provided, if promotional materials are accurate and if customer satisfaction is measured. Findings are also provided with regards to stakeholder, public participation and partnerships. Further findings are specific to social and economic benefits to the local community, benefits to cultural heritage and the environment. The findings are discussed according to the layout of the framework (Table 5.1).

### 5.3.1 Demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism

Demonstrating the effective sustainable management of tourism provides prospects of enhancing a positive future for the industry. Sustainable management is critical to Ireland taking into account the leading factors for tourists to choose Ireland as a holiday destination. This is due to the interdependent systems of the environment, economy and socio-cultural aspects (Fáilte Ireland, 2008). The assessment of the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare first examined if the stakeholders organisations and destination demonstrate the effective sustainable management of tourism.

**Figure 5.15** Demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism



From the stakeholders interviewed in County Clare, the majority claim their organisation (73%) and the destination (68%) in which they are located demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism. A particular stakeholder elaborated:

‘I think it’s getting there yeah, I think it’s a good example but it’s by no means, it’s not, no place in Ireland is complete,’ Respondent A01 (Landscape Charity).

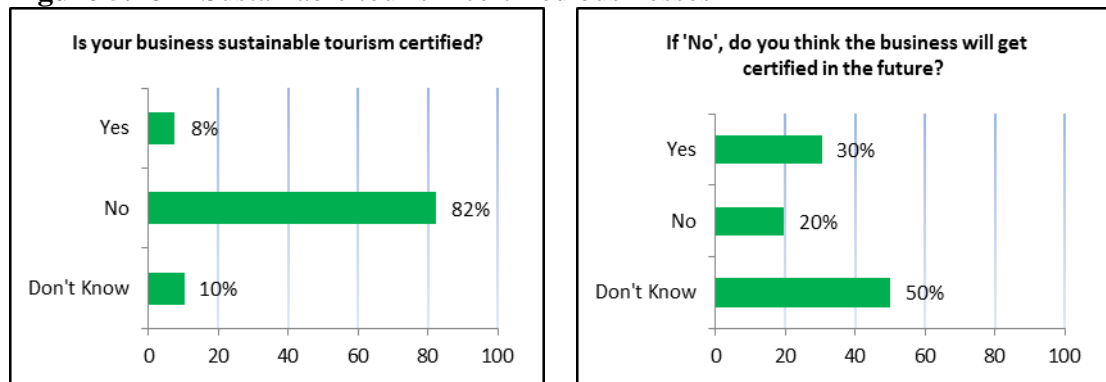
The results have identified the stakeholders perceive efforts are strong in demonstrating effective sustainable management of tourism. This warrants further in depth analysis. The findings to follow will determine the extent of sustainable management efforts. These will contribute to establish the level of supply of sustainable tourism. As sustainable tourism certification is a key tool for the sustainable management of tourism, the research also examined if the sample of Irish tourism businesses are certified.

### 5.3.2 Sustainable tourism certified businesses

Sustainable tourism certification is an effective sustainable management tool. It may be used to help a businesses gain competitive advantage in highly competitive

environments. ‘Going green’ has been recognised as an attribute to gain advantage (Appiah-Adu and Singh, 1998; Hurley and Hult, 1998; Rangel, 2000; Coglianesi and Nash, 2004; Mil-Homens, 2011). The research examined if the sample of Irish tourism businesses have self-regulated through certification and their intentions to become certified in future.

**Figure 5.16** Sustainable tourism certified businesses

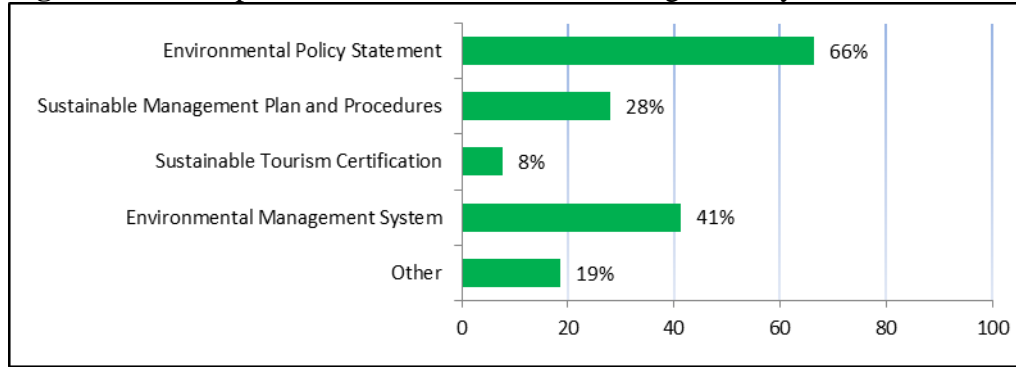


These findings report that the majority (82%) of the 369 tourism businesses are not certified. This would initially highlight some reason for concern even though 30% have intentions to become certified in the future. This is positive considering it is thought that certification may become a requirement to trade (Bendell and Font, 2004). The research has identified that a high percentage of holidaymakers to Ireland demand sustainable tourism. This in turn indicates the need for the industry to respond to these demands. The implementation of certification may enhance the supply to fulfil the current demand. Even though businesses may think they are sustainable, they possibly are not. The findings raise concern and query if the tourism businesses of Ireland implement any specific sustainable management systems.

### 5.3.3 Sustainable management system

The implementation of sustainable management systems will help improve and maintain resources for the future of the tourism industry. There is a range of instruments and tools that may be used to promote and implement sustainable management. This study investigated what is the most popular sustainable management system currently deployed by the sample of Irish tourism businesses. It is however evident from the findings (Figure 5.17) that some businesses implement numerous management systems.

**Figure 5.17** Implementation of sustainable management systems



From the analysis, the findings indicate an emphasis on environmental management rather than sustainable management. This is reflected as 66% of the tourism businesses implement an environmental policy statement, 41% implement an environmental management system and 72% have no sustainable management plan or procedure to implement it. As a result, the environmental policy statement seems to play a tokenistic role. Kuhre (1995) and Chan (2008) indicated that without management's commitment to implement an environmental management system, the program is likely to fail.

The sustainable management of tourism is not just environmental, it should also address economic, social and cultural aspects (Bramwell et al., 1996). Credible sustainable tourism certification would be the most effective tool to embrace all of these. The lack of effective sustainable management is characterised by a low implementation of a sustainable management plan and procedure and certification. There may be a need to support the tourism businesses in implementing sustainable management systems to advance the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. To progress the implementation of sustainable management systems, training on sustainable management would be beneficial.

#### **5.3.4 Supply of training on sustainable management**

It is essential to have the tourism industry personnel trained in sustainable management to ensure its implementation. Training is an important component of the drive to increase the adoption of multiple aspects of sustainable management in a tourism business (Dodds and Joppe, 2005; PAGS, 2005; Duc, 2009). Only through periodic training of the employees can sustainable management practices be implemented into daily operations.

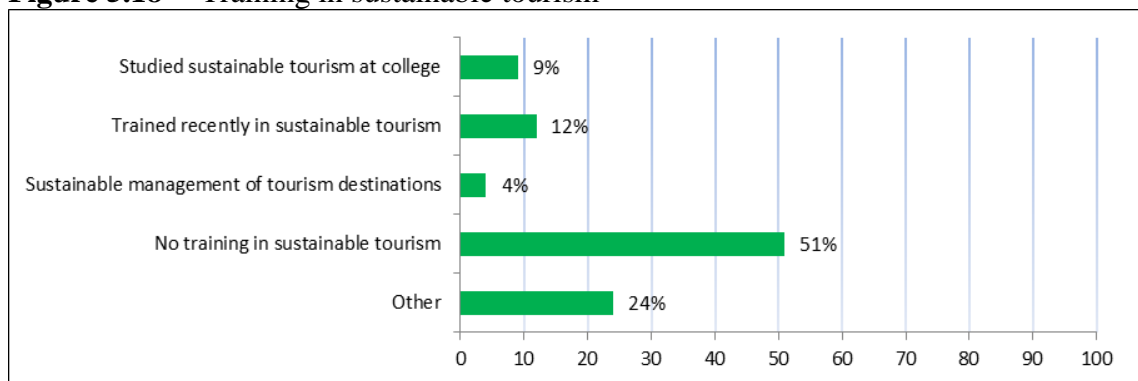
**Table 5.3** Supply of training in the role of sustainable management

Employees receive periodic training regarding their role in the management of environmental, sociocultural, health and safety practices	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
<i>*DK: Don't Know N/A: Not Applicable</i>	77	14	0	9	32	9	59

The majority of the stakeholders interviewed from County Clare claim their organisation (77%) provides periodic training in the management of environmental, sociocultural, health and safety practices. A significant 59% are uncertain of the destinations efforts as a whole in the supply of training in the role of sustainable management. It was considered relevant to identify the sustainable tourism training undertaken by the sample of national tourism businesses. This is integral to advance tourism management and the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland.

### 5.3.5 Training in sustainable tourism

For the effective sustainable management of tourism, the tourism industry requires personnel who are trained accordingly. The success of a business's sustainable management system depends on the effective integration and internalisation of the system by employees at all levels (GSTC, 2011). Education and training programs are an important principle for the sustainable management of tourism (Jamieson and Noble, 2000). For sustainability principles to be embedded into tourism planning, policy and practice, sustainability needs to be accepted as an integral part of the education process (Stacey, Tottle, Griffin and Flanagan, 2008). Therefore training in sustainable tourism is significant to the employees of the industry.

**Figure 5.18** Training in sustainable tourism

The findings of this study are therefore concerning. According to the sample of Irish tourism businesses, there is a lack of personnel trained in sustainable tourism working in the industry. A significant 51% from the 369 tourism businesses have received no training in sustainable tourism. Of the 49% who had training, 9% studied sustainable

tourism at college, 12% trained recently in sustainable tourism and 4% trained in the sustainable management of tourism destinations. Of the 24% that indicated ‘other’, they provided names of courses attended such as the ‘Tourism Learning Networks on Sustainable Tourism’. Even though there are indications of training in sustainable tourism there is much room to improve.

Education for sustainable tourism is no longer an option but a priority. A lack of knowledge and expertise is a challenge in trying to move towards sustainable tourism (Salima Sulaiman, 1996; Wilkinson, 1997; Carlsen et al., 2001; Font, 2002; Vernon et al., 2003; Dodds, 2007; Thwaites, 2007; Graci, 2009, 2010; Jarvis, Weeden and Simcock, 2010). The findings raise a gap in the education provided by the industry particularly as we near the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). It also creates a potential opportunity for Fáilte Ireland, Institutes of Technology and Vocational Education Committees as they play a role in tourism education. Having the correct education and training will aid the implementation of sustainable management of tourism. Not only could this support the supply, it would contribute to increase awareness of the relevant legislation and regulations.

### 5.3.6 Compliance with legislation and regulations

Legislation and regulations are required for the management of the tourism industry. International, local legislation and regulation are necessary to control the most fundamental and serious impacts of tourism (UNEP and WTO, 2005) and to address negative practices associated with tourism businesses (GSTC, 2011). However, legislation that controls many aspects related to the impacts of tourism may be contained in laws of various specific fields rather than being placed in a tourism law category (UNEP and WTO, 2005). For this reason, it is beneficial to maintain a list of up to date legal requirements to ensure compliancy with those relevant.

**Table 5.4** Compliant with relevant legislation and regulations

Procedure to keep an up to date list of legal requirements as to ensure compliancy with the relevant legislation and regulations	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
	66	24	5	5	41	14	45

Of the stakeholders interviewed, 66% claim their organisation keep an up to date list of legal requirements to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and regulations. A



considerable proportion (45%) of the tourism stakeholders was uncertain of the destinations efforts with regards to this. The findings suggest a possible lack of transparency, communication and dissemination of the relevant legislation and regulations for the destination. It may be particularly useful if information was assembled on the relevant legislation and regulations and disseminated to the tourism stakeholders. The task may be conducted by the local authorities as they oversee the majority of regulations specific to zoning, design, planning and infrastructure.

### 5.3.7 Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure

There is an abundance of regulations in which tourism buildings and infrastructure ought to comply. These regulations may be contained in laws relevant to fields such as planning rather than tourism (UNEP and WTO, 2005). According to SATC (2007) tourism is now achieving sustainability in its design, construction and operations. For many of the Co. Clare tourism stakeholders, they are located in a special area of conservation. As a result, it may have an influence on the buildings and infrastructure to fit in with the surrounding area. This was reflective in the results of the organisation as the majority (86%) claim to comply with local zoning and protected heritage requirements. The majority claim both the organisation (81%) and destination (77%) respect the natural and cultural heritage surroundings.

**Table 5.5** Design and construction of buildings and infrastructure

Indicators	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
Comply with local zoning and protected or heritage area requirements	86	0	0	14	59	14	27
Respect the natural or cultural heritage surroundings	81	0	5	14	77	14	9
Use locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction	62	14	10	14	59	18	23
Provide access for persons with special needs	71	19	0	10	82	9	9

Locally appropriate principles of sustainable construction are utilised to achieve healthy built environments. This also appeared to be in general compliance. On the other hand, the indicator to ensure access for persons with special needs is considered to be the strongest implemented by the destination (82%). Perhaps, this is because it is incorporated into Irish law for the majority of businesses. It is noted that 19% of the tourism organisations do not provide this access. It may be understandably difficult to retrofit a castle or a natural site with special needs access however other concerns were raised. A stakeholder from a tourism attraction stated:

‘We do provide special needs access, except the focal point itself as it’s a natural environment’, Respondent A2 (Attraction).

A tour boat company stressed,

‘We don’t have the equipment to do that, it would cost too much money to kit out the boat’, Respondent C02 (Tour Operator).

In short, the tourism organisations are relatively compliant with regards to the implementation of the indicators for design and construction of buildings and infrastructure. These conscious efforts of the stakeholders may be communicated through information provided to the holidaymakers.

### 5.3.8 Information and interpretation is provided

Providing information and interpretation of a location to the visitors has a significant role in achieving the goals of sustainable tourism. It may be used to influence appropriate visitor behaviour and is a key visitor management strategy for the sustainable management of tourism (Lane, 1994; Barrow, 1995, 1996; Wearing and Neil, 1999; Newsome et al., 2002; Eagles et al., 2002; Kuo, 2002; Tubb, 2003; Viljoen, 2008). It enhances the quality of the visitor’s experience and knowledge of the location (Cooper et al., 1998; Moscardo, 1998, 1999; Beaumont, 2001; Ham and Weiler, 2002; Bramwell and Lane, 2005; Kim, 2007). It has also been found to support toward the conservation of a location (Sharpe, 1976; Beckmann, 1991; Wearing and Neil, 1999) and provide enjoyment (Kreger and Mench, 1995; Bright and Pierce, 2002; Moscardo, Woods, and Saltzer, 2004). It can reduce impacts if stringent conditions are met (Littlefair and Buckley, 2008; Coghlan and Gooch, 2011) otherwise, interpretation does not change either attitudes (Tubb, 2003) or impacts (Boon, Fluker and Wilson, 2008; Littlefair and Buckley, 2008; Buckley, 2012). The organisations (82%) appear to be providing information to the customers about interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage.

**Table 5.6** Information and interpretation

	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
Information provided to the customers about interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage?	82	14	0	4	59	9	32
Appropriate behaviour while visiting explained?	68	18	0	14	36	14	50

The organisations also claim to explain appropriate behaviour while visiting (68%). From the visitor perspective, Moscardo (1998) indicated that information on interpretation needs to be organised in a way the visitors can access and follow it. Half of the stakeholders were uncertain if the destination provides information on the appropriate behaviour while visiting. Heritage interpreters tend to be highly intelligent

and there is a danger that the interpretation they provide would only be comprehensible to educated elite of heritage devotees (Bramwell and Lane, 1993; Garrod, Fyall, 2000). As a result, it is important to note that information is best provided in an informal fashion so enjoyment can remain an important element (Ham, 1992; Screven, 1995; Bright and Pierce, 2002; Moscardo, Woods, and Saltzer, 2004). It would be beneficial if information was provided to the customers about interpretation of the natural surroundings, local culture, and cultural heritage. Appropriate behaviour while visiting may be communicated jointly with the destinations promotional materials.

### 5.3.9 Promotional materials

The accuracy of promotional materials is imperative for the sustainable management of tourism. Accurate, responsible marketing leads to realistic expectations (Honey and Rome, 2001; WTO-UNEP, 2005; Thorn and Ramthun, 2009). Therefore the branding for a destination needs to be sustainable, believable and relevant (Morgan et al, 2002; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). The results with regard to the perceived accuracy of the promotional materials are presented below.

**Table 5.7** Promotional materials are accurate and complete

Promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered?	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
	95	0	0	5	68	5	27

The stakeholders interviewed indicate their organisations (95%) promotional materials are accurate and complete and do not promise more than can be delivered. One stakeholder stated:

‘If anything we tend to undersell, so we can beat the customers’ expectations when they arrive. Perhaps they expected a certain room and then we give them something better (Respondent A04, Hospitality).’

This response reflects the stakeholders strive for customer satisfaction. Promotional material that is accurate and complete is an indicator outlined by the GSTC to contribute toward the sustainable management of tourism. Providing realistic expectations of a destination will contribute to customer satisfaction.

### 5.3.10 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has a potential influence over the behaviour of consumers and their retention. As the customer is the central focus of the tourism experience,

satisfaction is paramount (Maddox, 1985; Geva and Goldman, 1991; Reisinger and Waryszak, 1994; Crompton and Love, 1995; Foster, 2010; Ziegler et al., 2012). However, measuring a tourist's satisfaction with a destination is different from that of the transaction specific level (Foster, 2010). A positive 73% of the stakeholders claim that their organisation measure customer satisfaction and take corrective action where appropriate.

**Table 5.8** Customer satisfaction measured

Measure customer satisfaction and take corrective action where appropriate?	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
	73	18	0	9	32	4	64

There is much uncertainty of the destinations (64%) actions with regards to measuring customer satisfaction. These findings may reflect a lack of recognition of studies carried out nationally and regionally by Fáilte Ireland, such as the annual visitor attitude survey. However the stakeholders were associating with Clare and not the Shannon Region as managed by Shannon Development. The findings highlight the need for better transparency, promotion and communication of the destination satisfactory surveys. Moreover, to communicate the findings from the surveys as these will allow the stakeholders to take corrective action where appropriate. This data would prove beneficial to the tourism stakeholders and management of the destination.

### 5.3.11 Stakeholder, public participation and partnerships

Stakeholder's meaningful participation is critical and a fundamental ingredient in sustainable management efforts (Sautter and Leisen, 1999). The study sought to explore to what extent the tourism stakeholder organisation involve stakeholder groups and encourage community involvement. A community's practical involvement in tourism is central to the sustainability of tourism (Murphy, 1985, 1988; Olsen, 1997; Mountain Agenda, 1999; Scheyvens, 1999; Ross and Wall, 1999; Campbell, 1999, 2002; Page and Dowling, 2002; Boyd and Singh, 2003; UNWTO, 2004; Jones, 2005; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Viljoen, 2007; Simpson, 2008; Lee, 2012). The research identified the tourism stakeholder organisations have many strengths in relation to stakeholder, public participation and partnerships (Figure 5.9). In particular, they encourage community involvement and claim to have worked out how to develop effective working relationships.

**Table 5.9** Stakeholder, public participation and partnerships

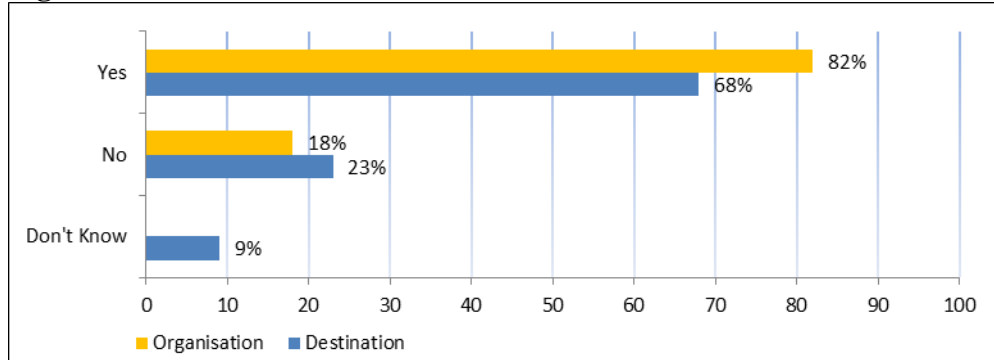
* DK: Don't Know	Organisation		
	Yes	No	DK
Encourage community involvement	81	14	-
Include community representatives in key decision making process	48	38	5
Report achieved aims to people who need to know	67	24	
Take into consideration how to maintain, maximise and improve communication between interests	71	19	5
Offer resources and support	71	24	-
Monitor the local community attitudes, issues and social conditions on positive and negative effects of tourism	48	48	-
Identify key stakeholder groups	71	19	-
Consider when and how people should be consulted and involved	71	14	5
Worked out how to develop effective working relationships	81	5	5
Sought agreement on visions, principles or objectives from key partners or stakeholders	57	24	10

The findings are encouraging as community participation at all stages in tourism management provides the stakeholders with a better chance to influence and deliver maximum benefits (Murphy, 1985, 1988; Olsen, 1997; Ross and Wall, 1999; Scheyvens, 1999; Campbell, 1999, 2002; Jones, 2005; Simpson, 2008; Hanrahan, 2009). Despite the strengths within the findings, aspects that require attention are to include community representatives in key decision making process. Attention is required to also monitor the local community attitudes. Transparency of the destinations management from the DMO with regards to stakeholder participation should be used to encourage and communicate the benefits of their involvement. This will contribute significantly to the sustainable management of tourism.

### **5.3.12 Maximise social and economic benefits to the local community**

Tourism has the potential to provide significant social and economic benefits to the local community. Sustainable management of tourism is important for social benefits to both tourists and residents (Craik, 1995; Besculides et al., 2002; Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012). It is also important for community development due to the economic benefits that the sector can generate while protecting the environment (Caldicott and Fuller, 2005). The analysis indicates the tourism stakeholders of County Clare consider their organisation (82%) to be maximising social and economic benefits to the local community as well as the destination (68%).

**Figure 5.19** Maximise social and economic benefits to the local community

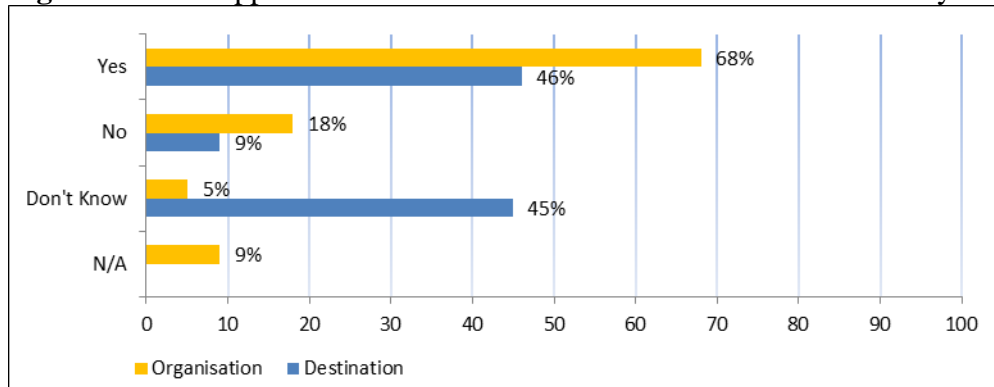


It is in the interest of all stakeholders to implement the sustainable management of tourism. Social and economic benefits to the local community may be enhanced by supporting initiatives for community development, employing local residents and supporting local entrepreneurs.

### 5.3.13 Support initiatives for social and infrastructure community development

The changes brought by tourism are often reflected in social and infrastructure community development. The associated developments allow for an enhanced experience for both the tourists and local community. Social sustainability includes maintaining and strengthening the quality of life in local communities (Denman, 2006; Viljoen, 2007). Furthermore, to promote the improvement of infrastructure and public services (Gibson et al., 2003; Fletcher, 2008; Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012). Infrastructure will not only help to attract and satisfy visitors, but serve the needs of the local community (Bosselman, Peterson and McCarthy, 1999; Endresen, 1999). As tourism is so important to communities, the sustainable management of tourism is a primary concern.

**Figure 5.20** Support initiatives for social and infrastructure community development

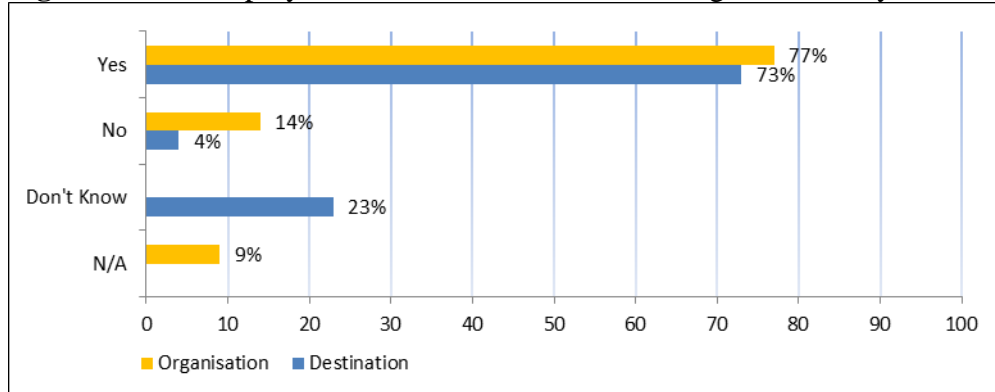


A significant percentage of the tourism stakeholders (68%) claim their organisation support initiatives for social and infrastructure community development. Almost half (45%) are uncertain of the destination's efforts. This would indicate a lack of action or communication of efforts by the relevant DMO. It would be important to incorporate this as part of sustainable management practice. A potential route to implementation would be through for example a GSTC compliant sustainable tourism certification program. This will generate benefits for community development and contribute to the supply of sustainable tourism. This is an important aspect that needs to be incorporated into the construction of the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

#### **5.3.14 Local residents employed and training offered**

The employment of local residents in tourism presents a series of opportunities. The principle of local employment is well established in the tourism literature (Twining-Ward, 2003; WTO, 2004; Viljoen, 2007; Roberts and Tribe, 2008; Strickland-Munro, 2010) as a significant source of income and employment for local residents (UNEP, 2003; Jamieson, 2006; Simpson, 2008; Bui, 2009; Rachel and Dodds, 2010). By importing employees, they compete with the locals, therefore diminishing tourism's benefits to the local community (Smith and Puczko, 2008; Bristow, Yang and Lu, 2010). Employing locals and providing opportunity for growth provides them with a feeling of responsibility which is central to the sustainability of tourism (Olsen, 1997; Campbell, 1999; Ross and Wall, 1999; Page and Dowling, 2002; Boyd and Singh, 2003; UNWTO, 2004; Simpson, 2008). Many communities hold the local businesses responsible to create a workforce that is representative of the area in which it is located (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007). A relevant action is to offer the necessary skills training (UNEP, 2003). This study explored if the local residents are employed and if training is offered.

**Figure 5.21** Employ local residents and offer training as necessary



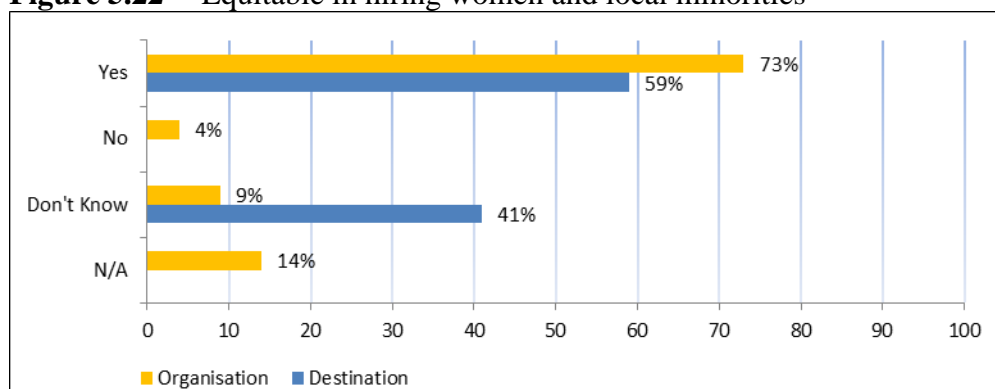
The majority of stakeholder's claim both the organisation (77%) and the destination (73%) employ local residents and offer training as necessary. Those that indicated 'not applicable' tended to be organisations operated by one person. These findings indicate the two aims for sustainable tourism, social equity and local prosperity (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005) seem to be integrated to an extent in the management of tourism in Clare.

#### **5.3.15 Equitable in hiring women and local minorities**

Tourism-related employment has received much attention and the issue of equitable hiring. It is often noted for its negative aspects, particularly to women (de Kadt, 1984; Smith, 1989; Levy and Lerch, 1991; Momsen, 1994; Pattullo, 1996; McLaren, 1998; Faulkenberry, Coggeshall, Backman and Backman, 2000; McKenzie-Gentry, 2007). Equitable hiring and work force diversity is the prerequisite for a successful and efficient organisation (Aghazadeh, 2004; Thomas, 2009). Being equitable is a principle that defines the condition for sustainable tourism achievement (Dodds and Joppe, 2005). Women are sometimes discouraged from taking on leadership roles in tourism communities (Gretzel and Bowser, 2013). Through equitable hiring of women and local minorities, it encourages a fair distribution of wealth and closes income gaps along gender and ethnic lines. Ireland has legislation for equitable hiring however this aspect was examined as it is part of the GSTC criteria.



**Figure 5.22** Equitable in hiring women and local minorities

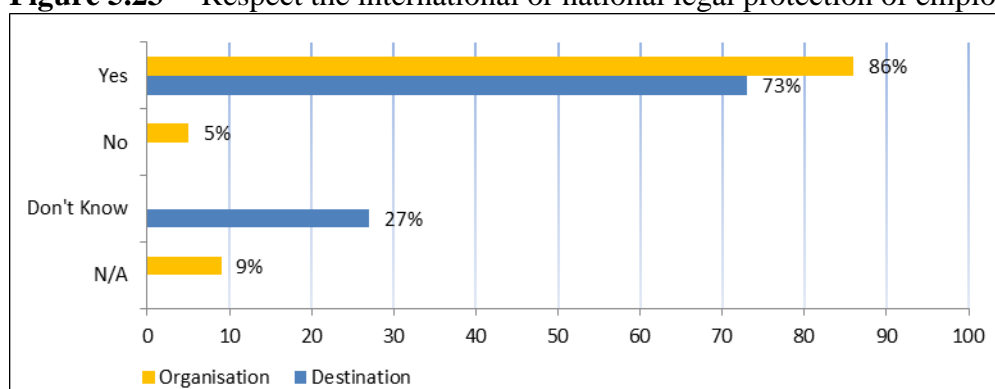


A high percentage of stakeholders indicated their organisation (73%) is equitable in hiring women and local minorities. There is some uncertainty (41%) of the destinations efforts. To encourage sustainability of operations, it is of fundamental importance to encourage, support and promote action in equitable hiring (UNEP and WTO, 2005). Even though this aspect is addressed by Irish law, this may be of significant importance to a country with no such laws or a developing country.

### 5.3.16 Legal protection of employees

The legal protection of tourism industry employees against potential negative impacts is vital. Those that profit from the industry must respect the law and acknowledge their legal and ethical responsibilities (George and Varghese, 2007). For instance mass tourism employment has often been criticised for failing to pay legal wage levels (Pattullo, 1996; Faulkenberry et al., 2000; Gmelch, 2004; Mc Kenzie, 2007). Without addressing the vital element of human rights, sustainable tourism would be restricted merely to environmental protection. Employers in Ireland are by law responsible for ensuring employees receive basic employment rights and must adhere to a range of legislation. This is reflected upon the findings (figure 5.23).

**Figure 5.23** Respect the international or national legal protection of employees

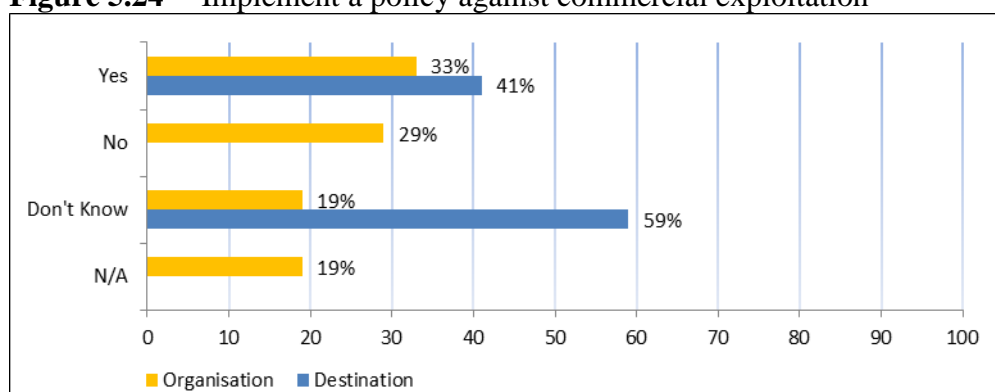


If the stakeholders failed to recognise human rights as a relevant category, the progression to sustainable tourism would not be possible (George and Varghese, 2007). However of the social and economic related indicators, the legal protection of employees claimed to be implemented at large by both the organisation (86%) and destination (73%). This is a particular area of strength due to it being well addressed by Irish law. The stakeholders seem to be aware of their legal responsibility to employees. It is important to note again that this is a GSTC criterion and may be more relevant to a country with no specific laws.

### 5.3.17 Implement a policy against commercial exploitation

A policy to protect against commercial, sexual and other forms of exploitation is essential within the tourism industry. The tourism industry is a key sector that needs to intervene on commercial exploitation (UNICEF, 2005). In Ireland, exploitation is prevented through legislation and regulations.

**Figure 5.24** Implement a policy against commercial exploitation



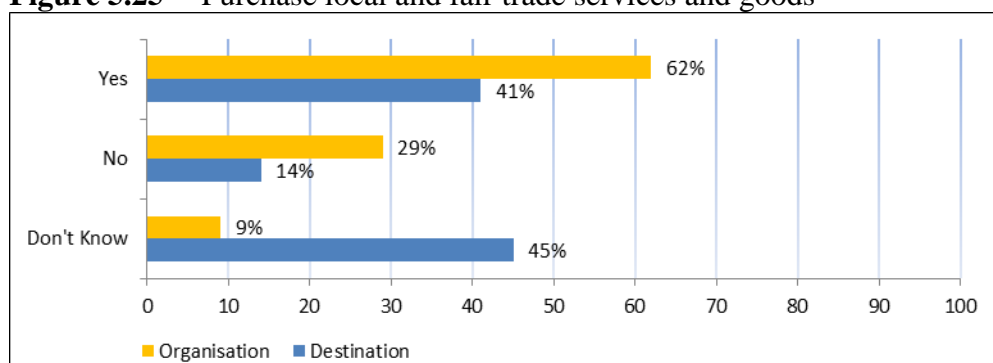
This indicator in particular may be assumed to be in place by organisations due to the laws in Ireland. Therefore according to the findings there is an apparent low compliance. This indicator would have further significance in developing countries.

### 5.3.18 Local and fair-trade goods and services are purchased

The proportion of goods and services purchased in a tourism destination is an indication of the economic impact. As the tourism industry is dominated by some powerful corporations that implicitly capture economic gain, there is a considerable amount of leakage (Tourism Concern, 1999; Krause, 2005; Cernat and Gourdon, 2012). This results in less economic benefit remaining for the local community. By providing a market for local goods and services, tourism can help maximise the supply - demand

linkages and minimise leakage (Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007; Nyaupane and Poudel, 2011). Thus, supply a source of greater economic benefit (Tourism Concern, 1999; Krause, 2005; Cernat and Gourdon, 2012) for the destination. This study sought to determine as to what extent the tourism stakeholders of county Clare purchase local and fair trade services and goods.

**Figure 5.25** Purchase local and fair trade services and goods

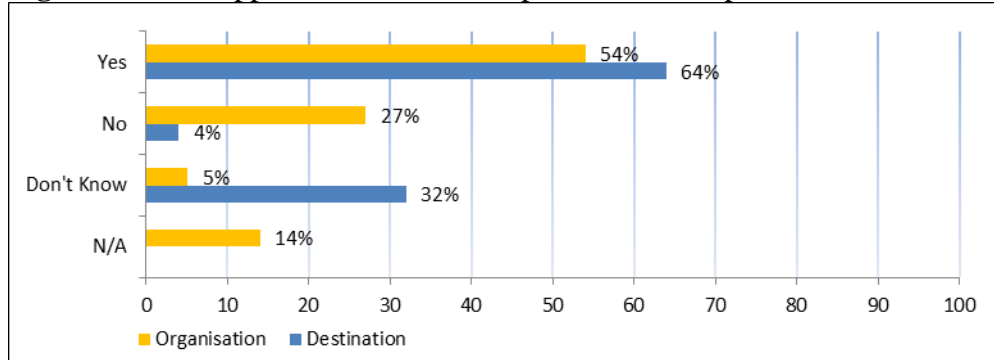


A high percentage of the organisations (62%) claim to purchase local and fair trade services and goods. This is an indication of the conscious efforts in purchasing behaviour which contribute socially and economically. Fairtrade in particular is a thriving and growing campaign movement as their products are now sold in more than 120 countries (Fairtrade Foundation, 2013). It would be ideal if there was transparency of the destinations efforts with regard to support for local and fair trade services and goods. Additional promotion may be required to generate awareness of their management efforts with regards to their purchasing of local and fair trade services and goods.

### 5.3.19 Support local entrepreneurs

Important to the success and sustainable management of the tourism industry at a destination level is the involvement of the local entrepreneur. The local small entrepreneurs are drivers of development (Hall, 2004; Tinsley and Lynch, 2007; Ryan, Mottiar, Quinn, 2012). They have been critical to the initial and continued development of the tourism industry (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Ryan, Mottiar, Quinn, 2012). The local entrepreneurs influence may span generations of involvement. Without their influence which has been identified as long lasting and dynamic, it is doubtful that a tourism industry would evolve (Koh and Hatten, 2002).

**Figure 5.26** Support local small entrepreneurs develop and sell sustainable products

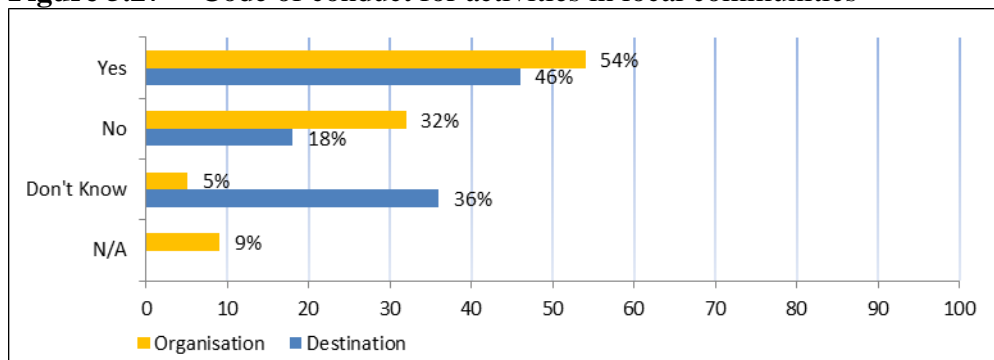


Over half of the stakeholders (54%) offer the means for local small entrepreneurs to develop and sell sustainable products. This is evidence of industry adaptation. Efforts may be advanced if the NTDA or RTA were to encourage the stakeholders to support, purchase or promote the local entrepreneurs products. Furthermore, that they promote the benefits of doing so as this is vital for the prosperity of Ireland as a destination. It may also enhance benefits to the local communities.

### 5.3.20 Code of conduct for activities in local communities

Protection of indigenous and local communities may be aided through the use of a code of conduct. Ethical tourism development can provide incentives to support indigenous and local communities' traditional customs and values (McNeely, 2004; Olsder et al., 2006; Trau and Bushell, 2008). A communicated code of conduct will enhance the legitimacy of traditional knowledge and aid in the protection and respect of sacred sites. Protection of the communities has potential economic value of traditional knowledge and can also play a role in the conservation of biological diversity (Persoon and Minter, 2011). Therefore the code is essential for the long term viability and sustainability of the community as well as the surrounding environment.

**Figure 5.27** Code of conduct for activities in local communities

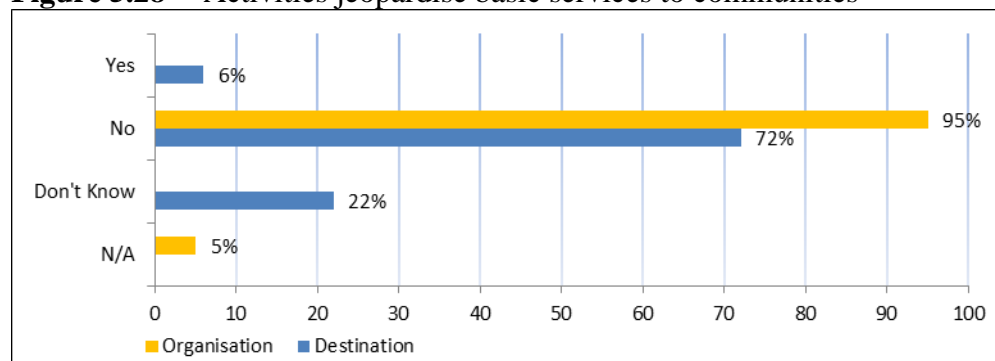


Over half (54%) of the stakeholders interviewed claim the organisation has a code of conduct for activities in local communities. It would be beneficial if a destination specific code of conduct was made available to the tourism stakeholders from the DMO. If there is no code already devised, this may be developed through the assistance of the multiple declarations and policy guidelines issued by national governmental organisations and international bodies (Persoon and Minter, 2011). It is vital to develop the code with the consent of and in collaboration with the local community (Mauro and Hardison, 2000). The code then needs to have successful outreach to facilitate the sustainable management of tourism. The code of conduct would be complementary in protecting the basic services of communities.

### 5.3.21 Basic services to neighbouring communities

The protection of basic services such as water, energy or sanitation to communities is critical for social and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, it is vital to maintain access to resources and avoiding possible forms of social degradation or exploitation (Denman, 2006; Viljoen, 2007). When the stakeholders were questioned regarding this indicator, 95% indicated the activities carried out by their organisation do not jeopardise the provision of basic services to neighbouring communities.

**Figure 5.28** Activities jeopardise basic services to communities

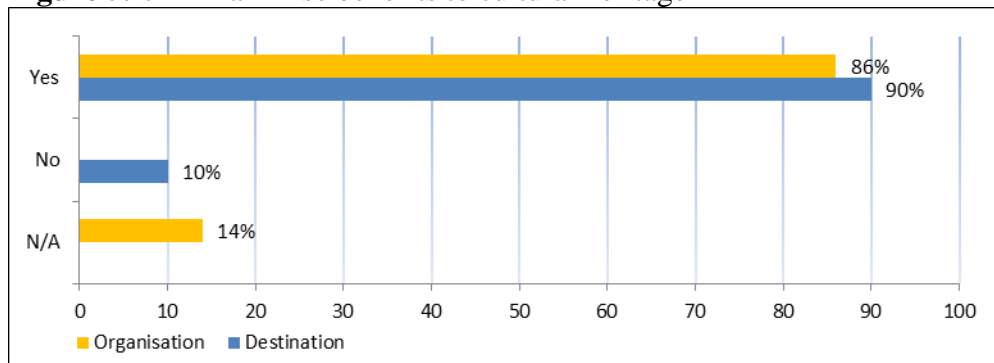


The stakeholders also indicated that 72% of the activities carried out by the destination does not jeopardise the provision of basic services to neighbouring communities. The protection of the communities' basic services is important for social and environmental sustainability. It is also necessary to maintain access to resources which contributes to the perception of the destinations management.

### 5.3.22 Maximise benefits to cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is an essential element to a destinations national representation. Ireland enjoys a rich cultural heritage that is central to our national identity (Fáilte Ireland, 2006). It is a key driver of Irish tourism. Research shows that cultural visitors spend almost twice as much as citybreak visitors (Nugent, 2012). The European Commission (2011) survey on the attitudes of Europeans toward tourism identified cultural heritage was the second most widespread response that influences a choice of destination. Therefore the UNWTO sustainable tourism principles are paramount. These principles outline that sustainable tourism should help conserve cultural heritage and traditional values. Furthermore, seek to engender intercultural understanding and tolerance.

**Figure 5.29** Maximise benefits to cultural heritage



The stakeholders claim both the organisation (86%) and destination (90%) maximise benefits to cultural heritage. Cultural heritage tourism is expected to generate revenue that may be used to maintain the cultural heritage properties (STCRC, 2010). Protection of these properties and sites may also generate enough resources to manage itself. The following publications are an example of the information offered by Fáilte Ireland to the tourism industry on cultural heritage:

- Cultural Tourism: making it work for you: a new strategy for cultural tourism in Ireland (2006).
- Sharing our stories: using interpretation to improve the visitors experience at heritage sites (2010).
- Interpretation and animation scheme (2012).
- A tourism toolkit for Ireland's cultural experiences: how to develop and communicate cultural experiences for visitors (2012).

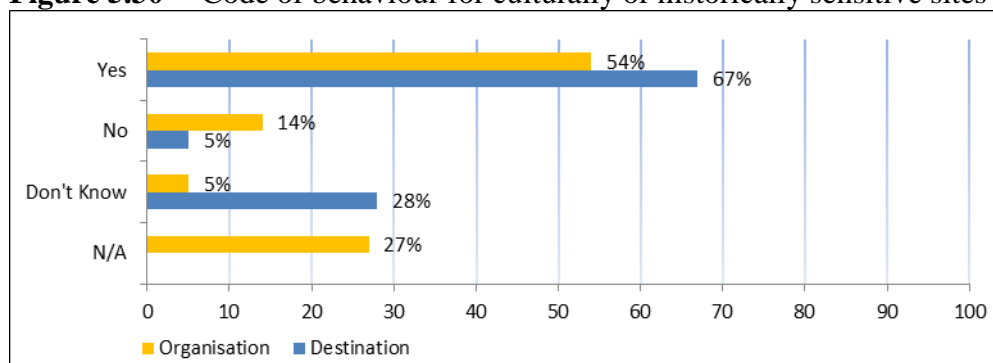
These publications have a strong marketing and promotion focus to maximise benefits from cultural heritage rather than maximise benefits to it. Cultural heritage can be fragile and may be easily damaged if not taken care of (IFT, UNESCO, 2007). Rather than a focus on marketing, the industry also needs support in the management and

protection of Ireland's cultural heritage. This is an important aspect to be clearly integrated to the research model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

### 5.3.23 Code of behaviour for visits to culturally, historically sensitive sites

For benefits to cultural heritage, this may be enhanced through a code of behaviour for visits to culturally and historically sensitive sites. Controlling the harmful effects of tourism with a particular emphasis on responsible behaviour and preventing cultural distortion is an essential element of cultural sustainability (Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Viljoen, 2007). Studies in the past found that heritage site managers have a limited understanding of tourist behaviour and how to manage it strategically (Beeho and Prentice, 1997; Garrod and Fyall, 2000; Watson and McCracken, 2002; Malcolm-Davie, 2004; Landorf, 2009). Communicating a code for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites can influence the appropriate behaviour to minimise visitor impact and maximise enjoyment.

**Figure 5.30** Code of behaviour for culturally or historically sensitive sites

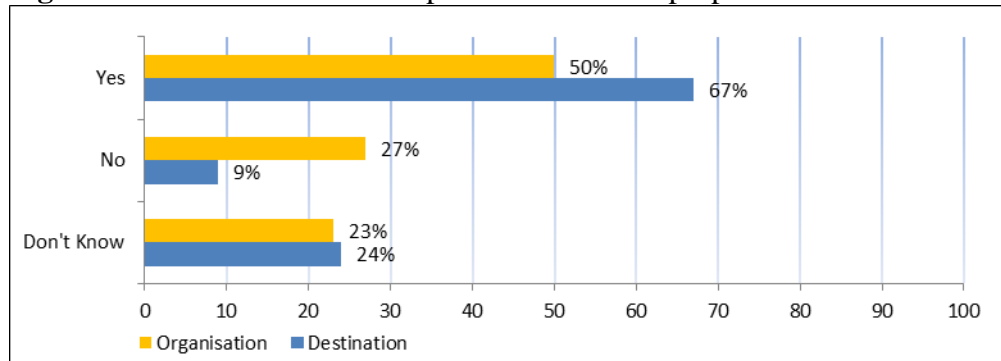


From the findings, there is evidence of industry adaptation. There is room to improve efforts in relation to a code of behaviour for visits to culturally or historically sensitive sites. If an organisation or destination has not yet established one of these codes, it may be developed through the help of those already established by heritage management agencies (IFT, UNESCO, 2007). It is important for the code to be altered to reflect the needs and priorities of the heritage site, host community and visitors. Therefore a consensus of the code must be established. Most importantly the communication of the code is necessary to contribute to the protection of the site. Communication of the code through pictorial displays would be most effective to overcome the issue of a language barrier.

### 5.3.24 Contribute to the protection of local properties and sites

A dimension of importance to cultural heritage is the protection of local properties and sites. Many heritage resources are lost due to physical deterioration from inadequate maintenance or neglect (NWHO, 1999). A way to protect and respect sacred sites is through well-planned ethical tourism development (McNeely, 2004; Olsder et al., 2006; Trau and Bushell, 2008). It is necessary to respect the intellectual property rights of local communities. Damage inflicted upon local culture is often irreparable (NWHO, 1999). With economic benefits to be gained from cultural heritage (IFT, UNESCO, 2007), it is an incentive for the industry to contribute to the protection of local properties and sites. Furthermore, that they do not impede access to these sites by local residents.

**Figure 5.31** Contribute to the protection of local properties and sites



Half of the stakeholders of County Clare indicate their organisation is contributing to the protection of local properties and sites. It is important that they also contribute to the protection of historical, archaeological, culturally and spiritually important properties. It is also important not to impede access to these sites by local residents (GSTC, 2008). Implementation of these management practices is fundamental to the sustainable management of a tourism destination. It is vital that this is factored into the construction of the research model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

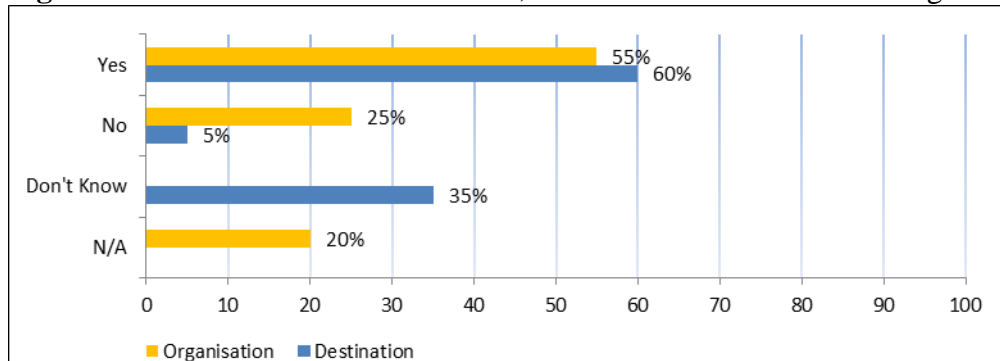
### 5.3.25 Use elements of local art, architecture and cultural heritage

The use of local art, architecture and cultural heritage in the operations of tourism organisations provides holidaymakers with tangible evidence of the past. Culture heritage is crucial to the identity, self respect and dignity of a tourism destination



(Endresen, 1999). Utilising tangible and visible aspects of cultural heritage will have a significant appeal to the tourists and enhance their cultural heritage experience.

**Figure 5.32** Use elements of local art, architecture and cultural heritage

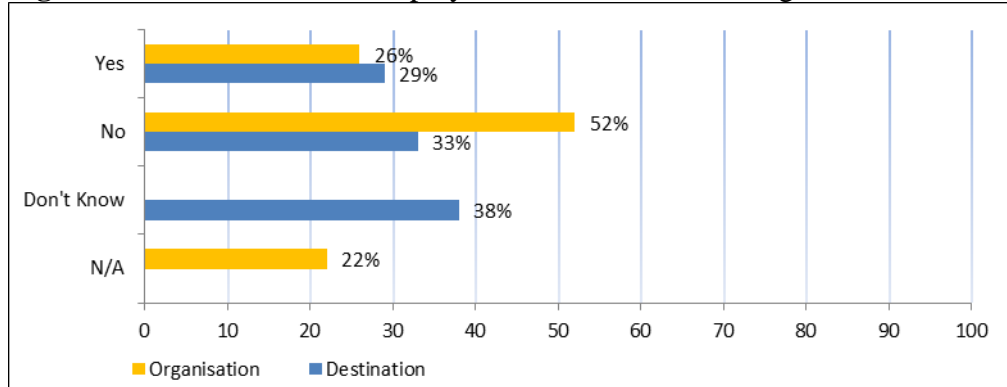


Elements of local art, architecture or cultural heritage in operations may be implemented through design, decoration, food or shops. However it is important to respect the intellectual property rights of local communities. Of the stakeholders interviewed, 55% integrate these aspects to their operations. This is significant for the sustainable management of tourism. The UNWTO code of ethics indicates tourism is to be a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and a contributor to its enhancement (NWHO, 1999). Incorporating local art, architecture and cultural heritage has been addressed in some of the publications offered by Fáilte Ireland to the tourism industry. It is important to again note the need for publications specific to the protection of Ireland's cultural heritage. Through the use of local art, architecture and cultural heritage, it will contribute toward authentic destination representation.

### 5.3.26 Protection of historical and archaeological artefacts

The protection of historical and archaeological artefacts is vital as they contain evidence of and a linkage to a destinations cultural heritage. Theft, removal and pilferage are a physical impact of visitors which is a serious threat to heritage sites (IFT, UNESCO, 2007). The Australian Heritage Commission and CRC for Sustainable Tourism (2001) indicate respect and sensitivity should be shown to such artefacts.

**Figure 5.33** Sell, trade or display historical and archaeological artefacts



The findings indicate 52% of the stakeholder organisations do not sell, trade or display historical and archaeological artefacts. Over a quarter of those interviewed claim the organisation (26%) and destination (29%) do. It must be taken into consideration that this is not necessarily negative, after all, it is acceptable to display the artefacts if managed correctly. For the sustainable management of tourism, it would be beneficial if the Fáilte Ireland strategy for cultural tourism in Ireland (2006) was updated and included a section to address the protection of artefacts. Historical and archaeological artefacts are a fragile aspect that needs to be managed for the future of tourism in Ireland; this in turn may enhance the sustainable management of tourism.

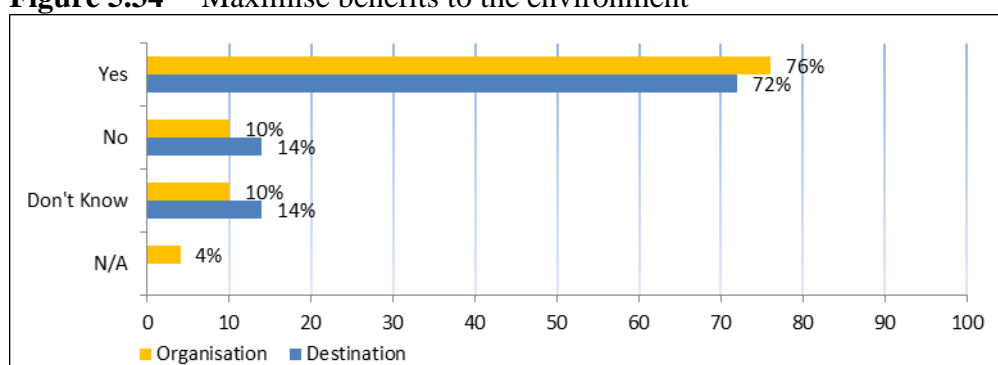
It has been deciphered that the management of cultural heritage needs more attention even though Ireland has multiple organisations to support the management of it. The Office of Public Works (OPW) alone has approximately 2,000 employees in more than 100 locations around Ireland. However the stakeholders did not mention their involvement in cultural heritage tourism management. As they fall under The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht perhaps they need to form a direct linkage with the NTDA. It would be pivotal to update and integrate these indicators to the information offered by Fáilte Ireland. It is also important that Fáilte Ireland create a new up to date cultural tourism strategy which includes education. These fragile aspects need to be managed for the future of tourism in Ireland; this in turn can enhance benefits to cultural heritage and the sustainable management of tourism.

### **5.3.27 Maximise benefits to the environment**

The environment plays a significant role in shaping tourism as the search for an unspoilt destination is growing among tourists. A survey on the attitudes of EU citizens towards

tourism identified the location's environment as the key consideration when deciding on a holiday destination (European Commission, 2011). Furthermore, half of the respondents indicated they would return to a place for its natural features (European Commission, 2012). Unfortunately many tourism businesses cater to the short term benefits and interests at the expense of environmental quality (Milne, 1998; Smith and Bui, 1998; Mason, 2003; Bui, 2009). Even though the negative impacts of tourism are frequently reiterated, tourism can also make a positive contribution to the environment (Saalinen, 2006). The UNWTO sustainable tourism principles outline that sustainable tourism should make optimal use of environmental resources through maintaining and conserving them.

**Figure 5.34** Maximise benefits to the environment



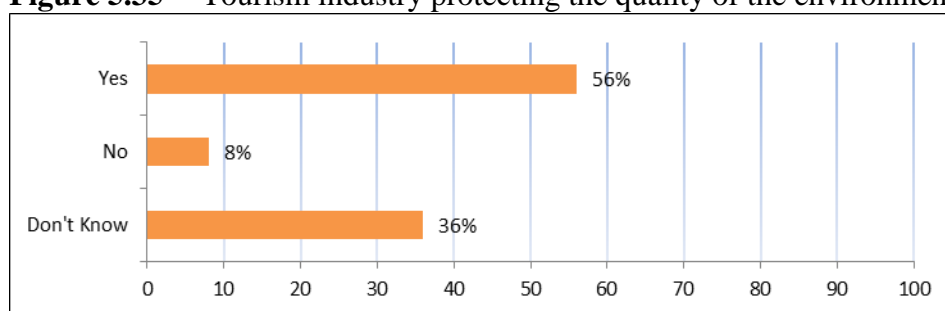
The analysis indicates the majority of stakeholders claim their organisation (76%) and destination (72%) maximise benefits to the environment. The following publications are an example of the information offered by Fáilte Ireland to the tourism industry on the environment:

- Review of good environmental policy and practice (2008).
- Facing the challenges of climate change, Fáilte Ireland's carbon strategy (2008).
- Interpretation planning guidelines (2012).
- Environmental guidelines for riding establishments (2012).

These publications are beneficial sources of information to the industry. There was also a 'tourism and the environment: Fáilte Ireland environmental action plan 2007-2009'. The three year action plan took account of national policy on sustainable development and a report from the EPA. At present, there is no up-to-date environmental action plan. The industry needs an environmental action plan to identify the environmental challenges facing the industry. Furthermore, to inform how the environmental challenges can be managed to protect Ireland's environment.

The research sought to determine if the 1356 overseas and domestic holidaymakers to Ireland perceive the tourism industry to be protecting the quality of the environment. Especially, as the tourists are interested in having a holiday at an unspoilt natural area (Dolnicar and Leisch, 2008). Even though the environment is ranked the most pleasing aspect of the holidaymakers visit, it is concerning that only (56%) of the holidaymakers consider the Irish tourism industry to be protecting the quality of the environment (figure 5.35).

**Figure 5.35** Tourism industry protecting the quality of the environment



The protection of Ireland's 'clean green image' should be evident to the holidaymakers. Particularly when there are state funded organisations such as An Bord Pleanála, ENFO and the EPA involved in the protection of the environment. A perceived lack of tourism industry effort to protect the quality of the environment may affect the visitor's opinion of Ireland's environmental management. If the protection of the environment is perceived unsatisfactory, a core reason for choosing Ireland as a destination may be harmed. Furthermore, it will make the marketing tasks of Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland difficult. These findings raise concern and reaffirm the need to have an up to date environmental action plan. Also that promotional material integrates a focus on the management of Ireland's natural resources. This aspect of the tourism industry protecting the quality of the environment merits consistent monitoring. This may be conducted through sustainable tourism monitoring or the visitor attitude surveys.

### 5.3.28 Conserve resources

A significant part of a visitor experience on holiday is shaped by the destinations natural resources. Conserving resources is critical to the future of the tourism industry considering the environment is the main resource for many tourism destinations (Cooper et al., 2008; Dolnicara and Leisch, 2008). After all, it is tourism that receives benefit from and produces direct and indirect impacts on the environments resources

(Buckley and Araujo, 1997; Cummings, 1997; Gossling, 2000, 2002; Chan and Lam, 2003; Aall, 2011; Charara, Cashman, Bonnell, and Gehr, 2011; Smerecnik and Andersen, 2011; Buckley 2012). Ireland is renowned for its exceptional natural environment and beautiful scenery. Therefore it is vital for the tourism industry to act responsibly and conserve resources.

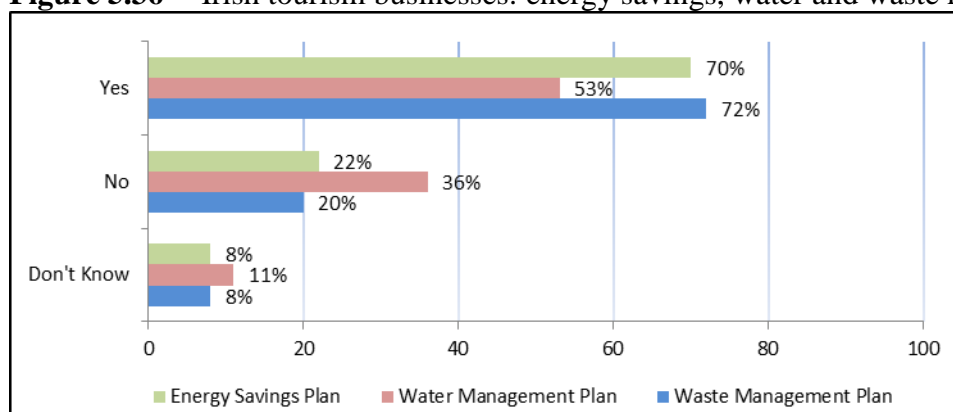
**Table 5.10** Conserve resources

*DK: Don't Know	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
Purchasing policy favour environmentally friendly products	48	48	0	4	24	14	62
Measure the purchase of disposable and consumable goods (and seek ways to reduce their use)	57	33	5	5	29	14	57
Measure energy consumption - indicate sources - implement measures to decrease overall consumption - encourage the use of renewable energy	62	28	5	5	19	14	67
Measure water consumption - indicate sources - implement measures to decrease overall consumption	50	32	9	9	14	14	72

A high percentage of the organisations (76%) claimed to be maximising benefits to the environment. However, the strongest practice implemented to conserve resources is the measuring of energy consumption (62%). This is possibly implemented as an economic measure to reduce energy spending. The stakeholder's express a lack of knowledge on the destinations efforts to conserve resources (Table 5.10).

This section in combination with the specific focus on County Clare incorporates findings from the 369 national tourism businesses. The research examined if the sample of tourism businesses implement an energy savings, water or waste management plan (Figure 5.36).

**Figure 5.36** Irish tourism businesses: energy savings, water and waste management



The key stakeholders of County Clare and the sample of Irish tourism business findings reflect similarities. It relays that efforts in energy management are stronger than water management. This may reflect how most businesses are exposed to higher energy costs than water. A waste management plan (72%) is the most common sustainable management practice implemented by the tourism businesses. The findings are an indication of industry adaptation. There are strengths in the management aspects that can in return contribute to economic savings. Conserving resources may continue to grow through the sustainable management of tourism. This would also contribute to reducing pollution. The management of these aspects are important for the inclusion of the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

### 5.3.29 Reducing pollution

Pollution and the tourism industry have a mutual connection. Tourism destinations rely on clean seas, unpolluted water, pristine mountain slopes and litter-free streets. This is required to be a product in which the travel and tourism industry can develop as a package to sell (WTTC et al., 1995; Welford and Ytterhus, 2004). However, tourism is a contributor to the pollution of the atmosphere, oceans and freshwater (Gossling, 2002; Gossling and Schumacher, 2010; Gossling et al., 2011; Buckley, 2012). It contributes to environmental issues which influcts upon experioences such as river tourism (Cooper, 2009). This leads to the impairment of the function or value of ecosystems because of pollution and waste from seasonal influxes of tourist numbers (Table 5.11).

**Table 5.11** Reducing pollution

<i>*DK: Don't Know</i>	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
Measure GHG emissions from all sources, procedures to reduce and offset	30	60	0	10	0	29	71
Treat effectively wastewater including gray water and reuse where possible	39	43	9	9	14	14	72
Substitute the use of harmful substances by harmless products when available, properly manage chemical use	69	22	0	9	14	14	72
Implement practices to reduce pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, air and soil contaminants	61	30	0	9	19	5	76

With regards to reducing pollution, the research has identified strengths and weaknesses. The strongest indicator addressed by the stakeholders is, 'substitute the use of harmful substances by harmless products when available and properly manage

chemical use' (69%). In addition to reducing pollution from noise, light, runoff, erosion, ozone-depleting compounds, air and soil contaminants (61%). The weakest indicator addressed is the measure of GHG emissions from all sources and implementing procedures to reduce and offset, which is of grave concern as it is arguably one of the long term threats. It has been noted that if everyone in the world polluted at the same level as the Irish, three planet earths would be needed to survive (World Resources Institute, 2008). Fáilte Ireland committed an effort to address GHG emissions through their carbon strategy, 'Facing the challenges of climate change' (2008), however there was much uncertainty about the destinations efforts to reduce pollution.

As tourism exerts impacts that are similar to other industrial activities, it is important that tourism destinations do not defy an attempt to control these. To maintain a future for destinations with an environmental appeal, the tourism industry ought to reduce and manage pollution. Environmental protection is easier and less expensive than environmental correction (Cooper et al., 2008). There are various sustainable management tools that may be used to reduce pollution and for the conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes.

### **5.3.30 Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes**

Natural tourism destinations are exposed to both positive and negative impacts on human and nonhuman participants. Positively, the popularity of natural wildlife tourism destinations have led the public to become more aware of and interested in environmental issues (Higginbottom, 2004; Newsome et al., 2004; Rodger, Moore, and Newsome, 2007). Fortunately, there is a realisation of personal responsibility for the state of the environment (Ballantyne, Packer, Hughes, and Dierking, 2007; Powell and Ham, 2008; Falk, 2009; Ballantyne, Packer, Falk, 2011). On the other hand the negative attitudes of resident communities towards conservation are a concern as these attitudes are associated with failures to conserve biodiversity (Infield, 1988; Mordi, 1991; Parry and Campbell, 1992; Newmark et al., 1993; Hitchcock, 1995; Ite, 1996; Alexander, 2000; Newmark and Hough, 2000; Walpole and Goodwin, 2001; Sekhar, 2003; Weladji et al., 2003; Mbaiwa and Stronza, 2011). The study sought to ascertain the stakeholders efforts in conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes.

**Table 5.12** Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes

<i>*DK: Don't Know</i>	Organisation				Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	N/A	Yes	No	DK
Harvest, consume, display, sell, or internationally trade wildlife species from the wild, as part of a regulated activity	9	82	0	9	5	19	76
No captive wildlife is held except for properly regulated activities	9	82	0	9	9	24	67
Use native species for landscaping and restoration, take measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species	50	36	5	9	24	9	67
Contribute to the support of biodiversity conservation	62	28	5	5	29	9	62
Make sure interactions with wildlife does not produce adverse effects on the viability of populations in the wild	43	52	0	5	24	9	67

Positively the majority of stakeholders (82%) do not harvest, consume, display, sell, or internationally trade wildlife species from the wild, as part of a regulated activity or have captive wildlife held (Table 5.12). Even though 62% contribute to the support of biodiversity conservation, only half use native species for landscaping and restoration and take measures to avoid the introduction of invasive alien species. The effort to conserve biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes has room for improvement. Especially as the Burren and Cliffs of Moher region of north Clare was awarded membership of the UNESCO-supported Global Geopark Network (2011) making them one of 78 Geoparks in the world.

The stakeholders again lack knowledge with regard to the destinations efforts. There is a need to communicate the destinations efforts in conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscape management. The National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) would have a vital role in County Clare as it is part of the Burren. ENFO would also have information on how to contribute to biodiversity, ecosystems and landscape management. However for the effective management of wildlife tourism activities it is essential to understand the social dimensions (Ziegler et al., 2012). Efforts may be enhanced if the RTA, in this case Shannon Development were to work with the NPWS and ENFO to direct information to the tourism stakeholders. This may be carried out through a workshop on why and how to maximise benefits to the environment. Furthermore, to inform how resources vital to the future of the environment and industry may be conserved. The management of biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes are pivotal for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.



## **5.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare have provided new material and understanding. These findings may be utilised as a baseline for future research. This analysis has identified that the majority of the 1356 domestic and overseas holidaymakers and the sample of 369 national tourism businesses understand the concept of sustainable tourism. A similar percentage of both the holidaymakers (66%) and tourism businesses (63%) think that all tourism should be sustainable. The majority of tourism businesses (79%) demand support to convert to sustainable tourism. There is also a demand for resources to implement sustainable tourism such as detailed information, funding to convert, training and mentoring. A high level of importance was expressed for the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism to be incorporated in the management of the Irish tourism industry.

The demand for sustainable tourism certification was examined. The holidaymaker and tourism business awareness of international sustainable tourism certification labels was greater than the national and local labels. There was agreement that the variety of certification labels causes confusion and there is a preference for one label that is recognised globally. There is concern of greenwashing associated with certification claims and it was agreed that it is important to have certification verified by an independent third party. There were positive indications with regards to the demand for sustainable tourism certified products and services. The holidaymakers (68%) and tourism businesses (51%) deem it essential to have certification in the tourism industry in Ireland.

With regards to the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare, the stakeholders perceive their organisation and destination demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism. Further analysis identified they were not demonstrating effective sustainable management as weaknesses were evident. The lack of effective sustainable management employed by the sample of tourism businesses is characterised by a low implementation of sustainable tourism certification (8%), sustainable management plans and procedures (28%). The focus among the sample of businesses is specific to environmental management rather than more far ranging sustainable management. Concern was raised as the sample of businesses have a lack of

personnel (51%) trained in sustainable tourism working in the industry. The tourism stakeholder organisations of County Clare have numerous strengths with regards to stakeholder involvement. Aspects that require attention are the inclusion of community representatives in the key decision making process and the monitoring local community attitudes, issues and social conditions.

The majority of stakeholders from County Clare (82%) consider their organisation to be maximising social and economic benefits to the local community. There was evidence of industry adaptation as they purchase local and fair-trade goods, support the local entrepreneurs, employ local residents and respect the legal protection of employees. Several of the social and economic related GSTC criterion is not applicable to Ireland and possibly more relevant to a developing country. It was deciphered that some cultural heritage management practices require more attention as efforts were modest. It was also identified that Ireland's cultural tourism strategy and guidelines need to be updated to reflect the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism, the GSTC criteria for destinations (2012) and the EC ETIS (2013).

The stakeholders indicate both the organisation (76%) and destination (72%) maximise benefits to the environment. The Irish tourism industry effort to protect the quality of the environment is not evident to all the holidaymakers. Furthermore, the NTDA environmental action plan is out of date since 2009. With regards to conserving the environment and natural resources, the findings between the sample of national tourism businesses and stakeholder organisations reflected similarities. Overall, the stakeholders lack awareness of the destinations management to maximise benefits to the environment.

These findings have been beneficial to establish the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare. As a result of the analysis conducted the chapter concludes by reassessing the theoretical framework (Table 5.1). Findings from the surveys, interviews and relevant theory are taken into consideration in the development of a basic toolkit to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism. The basic toolkit will be integrated within the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

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# SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF A TOURISM DESTINATION (COUNTY CLARE)

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## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the sustainable management of a tourism destination with a focus on County Clare. Principally, the analysis addresses the second aim of this research:

2. Examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination (County Clare).

In order to achieve this aim, it was necessary to focus the analysis with the following objectives:

- c) Determine the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland.
- d) Examine the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare.
- e) The development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

In order to examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination, a theoretical framework was designed and utilised (Table 6.1). The framework built upon related theory, models and principles from major authors in the area of tourism destination management and the sustainable management of tourism (Foh, 1999; Cooper, 2002; Howie, 2003; Page, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Australian Government, 2004; Jamieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2007; Holden, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Moscardo, 2011; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013).

The framework is divided into separate areas. It initiates by assessing the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism destinations. There is a gap in knowledge regarding the demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland. The data generated from the tourism business and holidaymaker survey responses are utilised to bridge this gap.

**Table 6.1** Framework to assess the sustainable management of a tourism destination

6.2	Assess the demand for sustainable tourism destinations
6.3	Assess the supply of sustainable tourism destinations
6.4	Tourism destination parameter
6.5	DMO to lead and co-ordinate
6.5.1	DMO interaction with stakeholders
6.6	Tourism destination manager
6.6.1	Funding a tourism destination manager
6.7	Vision of a tourism destination
6.7.1	Timeframe for the vision
6.8	Destination policy and planning Destination policy and planning, destination analysis, policy development, transport planning, land use and physical planning, monitoring and evaluation
6.9	Macro environment Political, economic, sociocultural, technological, natural, climatic, environmental, geographical
6.10	Organisation and management structure Design of organisational structures, development of leadership and management capacities, management of stakeholder participation
6.11	Destination operations and core resources Waste, water quality, air quality, wildlife, forest/plant, habitat, visitor, biodiversity, resident/community, crisis management, commemorative integrity, culture and history
6.12	Product marketing and development Product development, training for product development, location, safety/security, cost/value, awareness/image, visitor management, marketing research, a developed marketing strategy, a developed promotion strategy, quality of service or experience
6.13	Destination regulations
6.13.1	Destination management tools EMS, LA21, cleaner production, certification (accredited), education, industry regulation, visitor management techniques, environmental impact assessment, carrying capacity calculations, consultation and participation techniques, codes of conduct, sustainability indicators, fair trade in tourism, area protection, footprinting and carbon budget analysis

Source: Adapted and modified from (Foh, 1999; Cooper, 2002; Howie, 2003; Page, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Australian Government, 2004; Jamieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2007; Holden, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Moscardo, 2011; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013).

In order to probe tourism stakeholders and examine the sustainable management of tourism in a destination, the theoretical framework incorporated the major themes emerging from the literature. This initiates by determining the tourism destination parameter, identify if there is a DMO, destination manager and vision for the destination. Other factors and approaches for the sustainable management of a tourism destination are incorporated.

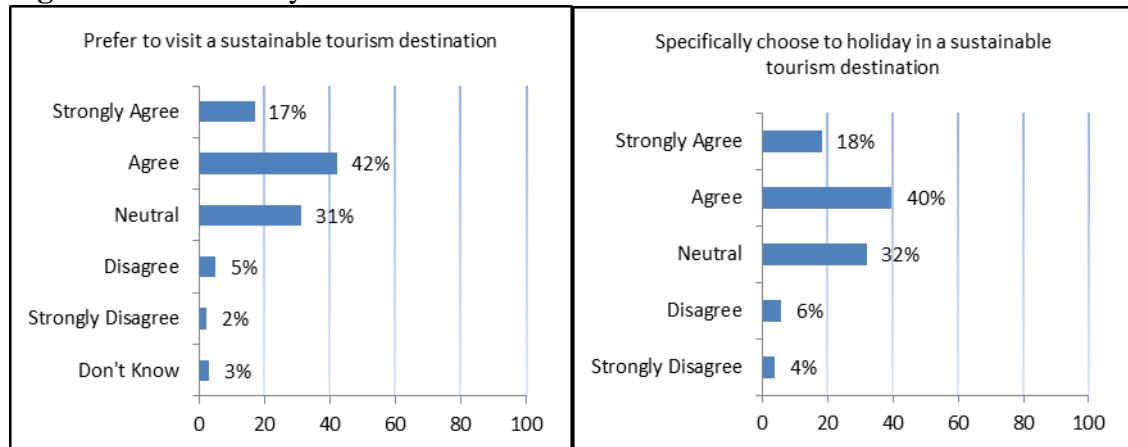
The construction of strategic open-ended questions for qualitative in-depth interviews with tourism stakeholders generated a large quantity of data related to the framework. The interview responses were complimented with findings from a content analysis of County Clares strategies and plans. Further analysis on the sustainable management of a tourism destination is discussed in context of relevant theory and findings. The use of a

multi-methodological approach results in findings from a wide acumen on the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The concluding section incorporates a discussion on the amendments made to the framework. There is an explanation of how the research findings and elements of the framework may be integrated to develop the model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. This chapter initiated with a discussion on the level of activity linked to the theoretical framework which is discussed in chronological order.

## 6.2 Assess the demand for sustainable tourism destinations

The shift toward the implementation of sustainable management is significant for the future of tourism destinations. It is necessary for tourism destinations to respond to the demands of the market and protect the resources it depends upon. The demand for sustainable tourism destinations has never been examined in Ireland. However, it is known that Ireland is chosen as a holiday destination mainly due to its scenery and unspoilt environment (Fáilte Ireland, 2010b). The advancement toward the sustainable management of tourism destinations may speed up if a demand for sustainable tourism destinations is identified.

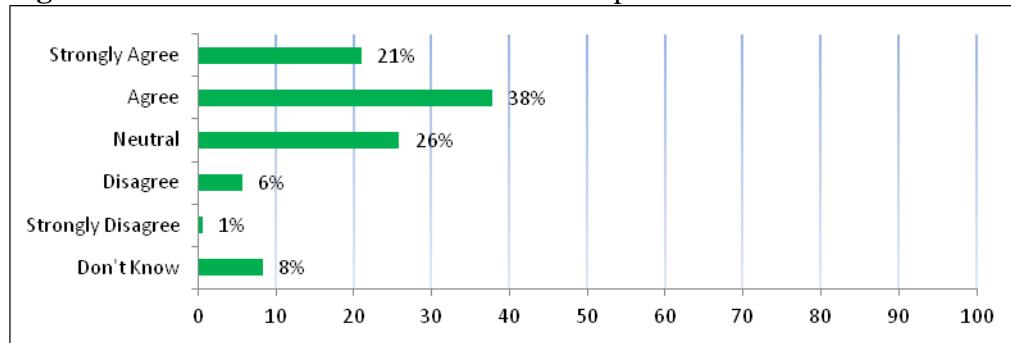
**Figure 6.1** Holidaymaker demand for sustainable tourism destinations



The findings indicate a holidaymaker demand for sustainable tourism destinations (Figure 6.1). Over half (59%) of the holidaymakers ‘strongly agree/agree’ that they prefer to visit a sustainable tourism destination. The findings are encouraging as they correspond with the frequency of holidaymakers (58%) that specifically choose to holiday in a sustainable tourism destination. The holidaymakers appear to make conscious decisions on their choice of holiday destination. The research sought to

ascertain if the demand for sustainable tourism destinations was solely driven by the holidaymakers or if the sample of Irish tourism businesses would prefer to be part of a sustainable tourism destination.

**Figure 6.2** Tourism business demand to be part of a sustainable tourism destination

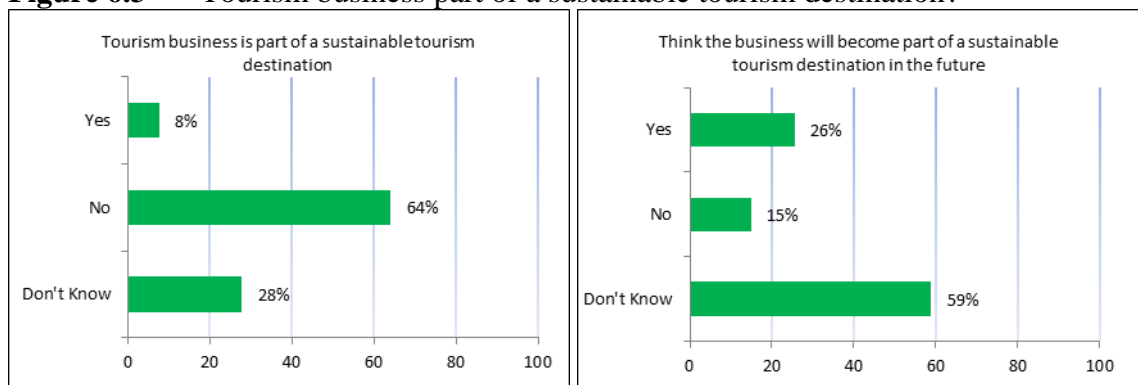


The tourism business preference to be part of a sustainable tourism destination (59%) corresponded with the findings of the holidaymakers (Figure 6.2). This informs the tourism industry that this demand is not solely consumer driven as the tourism businesses also prefer to be part of a sustainable tourism destination. It is recommended that the NTDA continue to monitor these demands through the visitor attitude survey and communicate the findings to the stakeholders.

### 6.3 Assess the supply of sustainable tourism destinations

The supply of sustainable tourism destinations is principally required to protect the destination resources for future generations. This is also essential in order to respond to the demands of conscientious consumers (SNV, 2009). To determine the supply of sustainable tourism destinations, 369 tourism businesses were asked if they considered themselves part of a sustainable tourism destination.

**Figure 6.3** Tourism business part of a sustainable tourism destination?



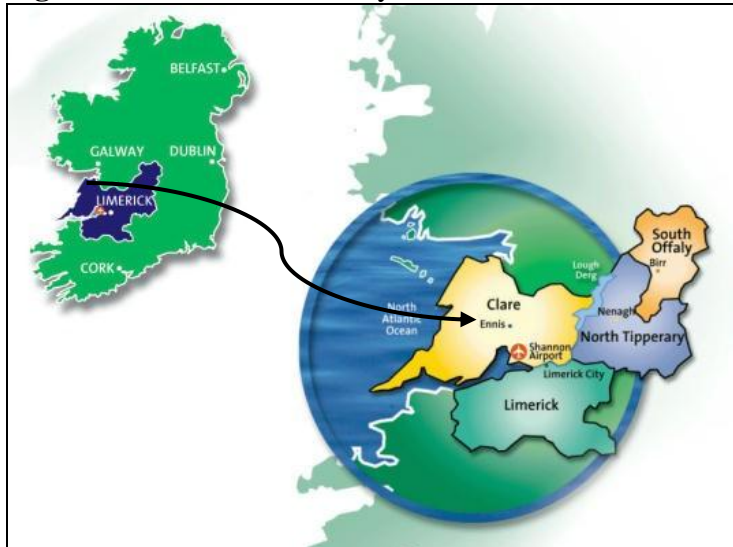
The assessment has identified that there is possibly a shortfall in the supply of sustainable tourism destinations. Nearly two-thirds of national tourism businesses (64%) indicated that they were not part of a sustainable tourism destination. This was followed by questioning if they think the business would become part of a sustainable tourism destination in the future. The findings indicated much uncertainty (59%), with (26%) indicating 'yes'. As part of the NTDA 'Develop your locality' (2012), ideally this could involve measures for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. This will require much regulation and planning to ensure its implementation. The NTDA, RTA and DMOs position should play a significant role to enhance the sustainable management of tourism destinations in order to meet the demand for sustainable tourism destinations.

#### **6.4 Tourism destination parameter**

For the assessment of the sustainable management of tourism in Clare, this was focused within the clear geographical parameter of the County. A tourism destination is the primary unit of management action (Timur, 2003; Ritchie, 2009; Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010; Fyall, 2011). The destination is an appropriate scale for considering the sustainable management of tourism (Koeman et al., 2002). A formal definition of a destination is often neglected, yet is critical since all the sustainable management practices that follow relate directly back to the destination as it has been defined (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). Without a clear designation of the destination's geographical and/or community parameters, it is difficult to calculate the carrying capacity of the area.

The study area, County Clare was chosen from a list provided by the NTDA as it is recognised as a priority destination (Airini, 2010). The county is located within the designated sub region, Ireland's Shannon Region (Figure 6.4). This area comprises of Limerick, Clare, North Tipperary and South Offaly (Shannon Development, 2012). This is managed by Shannon Development, who as mentioned is a government, regional development company operating as the RTA. Their work is complementary to that of the NTDA.

**Figure 6.4** Research study tourism destination



Source: Adapted and modified from Shannon Development (2011)

The tourism stakeholders of County Clare were questioned on the name of their destination. What was considered a straight forward question in fact received a wide variation in interpretation as over nineteen destinations were stated. When questioned if they identified with one destination or more, the majority identified with even more destinations and expressed confusion:

‘There’s the Burren and Lough Derg and there’s West Clare, Loop Head, Shannon Estuary, we could have four destinations’, Respondent B08 (Local Authority).

‘Yeah well we would in some ways I suppose we would identify ourselves with Co. Clare overall, well North Clare I suppose first and the Burren and then Clare. So it kind of depends on how or who we’re talking to and what is it. So if I’m at, you know, a meeting in Clare with tour operators meeting in Ennis, I’m the Cliffs of Moher. But if I’m in Tokyo with Tourism Ireland, I’m Ireland first, West of Ireland, Co. Clare, Cliffs of Moher. In that order’, Respondent A06 (Attraction).

Not only are all respondents located in County Clare, they are part of the Shannon Region however much this appears to be unclear. The assessment questioned how the stakeholders define the parameter of the destination. The results indicated a wide variance of responses. There appears to be a problem. The respondents defined a vast scale of parameters ranging from a region, county, village and self-contained centre:

‘26 acre fully serviced site’, Respondent A02 (Attraction Manager).

‘It’s just the Cliffs of Moher, and if you spoke to the tourists, it’s so internationally known as the Cliffs of Moher’, Respondent A05 (Retailer).



For the sustainable management of a destination, a parameter too large is problematic (Lee, 2001) while a parameter too narrow is not practical (Schianetz, Kavanagh, Lockington, 2007). The Shannon Region parameter which is the actual RTA parameter as defined by Shannon Development (2011) was acknowledged by only four of the respondents. The destination is also extremely fragmented in terms of where the stakeholders claim affiliation to. Responses to the question on where the stakeholders claim affiliation to were categorised by those most prevalent: the Burren (31%), County Clare (22%), Shannon Region (9%), others identified with localities and self-contained centres such as tourism attractions. Shannon Development was formed decades ago however, the key tourism stakeholders do not affiliate to the region managed by them.

From a content analysis of County Clare's tourism management organisation strategies and plans, confusion was also apparent with regards to the destinations parameter. The marketing by Clare Tourism Forum markets the destination according to the parameter of the County not as the Shannon Region. These findings and responses clearly imply there is some confusion, a lack of understanding and fundamental difference in the scope of defining the parameter of the destination. The stakeholders work and live in the same county and region, even though they do not appear to be recognised as the same destination. This confusion has implications for the sustainable management of a tourism destination and for Shannon Development managing the area. It is important to stress the need for a destination's parameter to be communicated or perhaps define new parameters for Clare as a tourism destination.

For tourism destinations that do not have a clear delineated parameter, ideally, it should be determined through stakeholder participation techniques and partnerships. This is a tool of sustainability presented by Mowforth and Munt (2009) and also acknowledged by the UNWTO (2007). In Ireland, it is recommended to use a county as a parameter as it is already defined and can be easily understood. This is a suitable scale to be meaningful and practical for the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

### 6.5 Destination Management Organisation to lead and co-ordinate

The Destination Management Organisation (DMO) has a vital role in managing tourism (TSG, 2007; UNWTO, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008; Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). The nature of a DMO has seen a transition from the shift of marketing to management (Gretzel et al., 2006; Pike, 2008). It has seen the inclusion of activities important to the success of tourism in a destination from a competitive and sustainable perspective (Presenza, Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005). Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie and Sheehan (2010) highlighted that while certain managers of a DMO may be stretching the definition of the DMOs management power and responsibility a bit too far, the question must be asked: “If the DMO does not provide leadership and direction for tourism development in the destination, who will?”. There are many organisations involved in the management of tourism for the study area, County Clare (Table 6.2). These range from a national to local level.

**Table 6.2** Organisations directly involved in managing tourism in County Clare

Organisation	Destination
NTDA	Ireland
Shannon Development	Shannon Region
Shannon Heritage	Shannon Region
Shannon Trails Initiative	Shannon Region
Mid West Regional Authority (MWRA)	Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary
Clare County Council	County Clare
Clare County Development Board	County Clare
Clare Local Development Company	County Clare
Clare Tourism Forum	County Clare
Clare Tourist Council	County Clare
LEADER	County Clare
Burren Beo	Burren
Burren Connect	Burren

The NTDA appointed Shannon Development as the RTA to manage the Shannon Region, this encompasses County Clare. They are in essence the DMO. The remaining organisations involved in managing tourism in Clare manage tourism according to their primary remit. From a content analysis of the tourism strategies and plans, there is no DMO that incorporates the sustainable management of tourism. Burren Beo and Burren Connect integrate a focus dedicated toward sustainable management however this is limited to the parameter of the Burren.

The tourism stakeholders of County Clare were asked if they thought it was an advantage to have a DMO to lead and co-ordinate destination management. All stakeholders agreed this would be an advantage and expressed confusion due to the plethora of organisations managing tourism in County Clare:

‘...you have all these groups that have sprung up over the last number of years and to be honest I don’t know what their aim is,’ Respondent A02 (Attraction).

One respondent claims the current organisations are not capable of managing the destination:

‘...none of the organisations that are run at the moment are fit for purpose... You’d have to create something completely new. And I think all the organisations that exist would have to have a role in that new organisation, so it would end up being, a quango of sorts,’ Respondent A07 (Conservation Project).

The contention of co-ordination is reflective in the latter response. After all, the leadership and co-ordination roles performed by a DMO are the essence of on-going, long term success (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). The low supply of sustainable tourism destinations could be related to the fact that in the case of County Clare, there is no DMO appointed to co-ordinate the sustainable management of tourism. This must warrant urgent attention as even though there are many organisations managing tourism in Clare, the stakeholders are confused with the current plethora of organisations. Having Shannon Development as the RTA is region specific and not solely for the stakeholders of County Clare. It is a matter for concern that the key stakeholders interviewed have not clearly identified Shannon Development as managing the destination considering that it was formally inaugurated a few decades ago. To add to this confusion their remit is currently under review as there is major restructuring going on within the six RTA’s and Shannon Development.

It is obvious then that the multiple organisations involved in the management of tourism in County Clare causes confusion. It may be more effective if the NTDA were to intervene to appoint one specific DMO to lead and co-ordinate the sustainable management of tourism destinations. For destination management to be obvious and practical, the organisation may be best established within the existing boundaries of the county council. The county council has a natural status within which the management could be conducted. In addition, it has many essential services that are linked to tourism management. The remit of management would be easily understood by the stakeholders. This would be beneficial in order to gain stakeholder interaction with the DMO for the management of the destination and to mobilise the resources necessary to be effective.

### **6.5.1 Destination Management Organisation interaction with stakeholders**

The DMOs interaction with stakeholders is vital to co-ordinate the sustainable management of tourism. The presence of a DMO that involves different stakeholders is required for the planning and management of tourism (Heath, 2002; Page, 2003; TSG, 2007; UNWTO, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). By securing the co-operation of various stakeholders, the DMO can mobilise the resources necessary to be effective. The tourism stakeholders interviewed were asked if the DMOs ability to interact effectively with destination stakeholders is important to its success.

There was agreement among all stakeholders that the DMOs ability to interact effectively with the destination stakeholders is important to its success. The responses were definite:

‘Vital because sometime my own criticism would have a lot of the national organisations, that they really don’t have a relationship with the people on the ground, so there needs to be much more. And also there needs to be better facilities for people on the ground to feed into the system and be listened to...,’ Respondent A07 (Conservation Project).

‘Oh God absolutely, that is vital yeah. And I think also, communication. That is just so important. And a lot of the time we don’t, we’re not communicated as individuals. We hear it on the grape vine or it happens before were told it...,’ Respondent C04 (Visitor Attraction).

‘Absolutely yes...the Cliffs of Moher are a legacy of the Irish people, particularly of the community of North Clare... So it’s very important that we are working closely with the local community, with the local tourism stakeholders and so on...,’ Respondent A06 (Attraction).

The responses reflect the importance of an effective relationship that a DMO must have with destination stakeholders. After all, if interaction with the stakeholders such as the local residents is not effectively managed, then they may become unfriendly toward visitors (Bornhorst, Brent Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). Interacting effectively may generate stakeholder confidence. Thus improve the DMOs ability to attract funding, partnerships and collaboration that lead to greater resources to fulfil its mandate. The findings identify that in addition to appointing a DMO, it is necessary to ensure they have the ability to interact effectively with the stakeholders to co-ordinate the management. That management may be effectively co-ordinated through an appointed tourism destination manager.

## **6.6 Tourism destination manager**

A tourism destination manager designated to influence the implementation of sustainable management is essential. A destination manager is employed in an increasing number of destinations (Howie, 2003; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). The ‘powers’ that go with the destination manager role are largely ones of influence and persuasion rather than authority (Howie, 2003). A key to cultural change toward sustainability is leadership (Doppelt, 2010). This position is typically from the local authority or private destination company (Enterprise DG Publication, 2003). This study compiled a table of the individuals and tourism management positions within County Clare to assist in the identification of who is the ‘destination manager’. It was established that there are an abundance of tourism management positions (Table 6.3).

The organisations and individuals listed in the table are managing the destination according to their remit. The RTA Shannon Development has sixteen tourism positions (Table 6.3). From a review of the organisations positions they appear to be dated, focused on destination marketing rather than management. Many budgets contribute to these positions. However there is no specific person appointed as destination manager or a position specific to the sustainable management of tourism.

**Table 6.3** Tourism management positions within County Clare

Organisation	Name	Position	Full Time	Part Time	Voluntary
Fáilte Ireland	John Concannon	Director of Market Development	✓		
Shannon Development	Pat Daly	Tourism Division Manager	✓		
	Annmarie Mc Carthy	Admin Support	✓		
	John Ruddle	Chief Executive Shannon Heritage	✓		
	<b>Marketing Team</b>				
	Paul Ryan	Tourism Marketing Manager	✓		
	Paul Mockler	Tourism Marketing (US and Canada)	✓		
	Marian Leydon	Tourism Marketing (GB and Europe)	✓		
	Aisling Travers	Tourism Marketing (Ireland)	✓		
	Laura Meehan	Tourism Marketing (Festivals and Events)	✓		
	<b>Product Development</b>				
	Flan Quilligan	Product Development Manager	✓		
	Oonagh Kelly	Product Development Exec.	✓		
	Phil Deegan	Product Development Exec.	✓		
	Ruairi Deane	Product Development Exec.	✓		
	<b>Visitor Services</b>				
Clare County Council	Marian Hurley	Visitor Services Executive	✓		
	<b>Business, Sport, Event Tourism</b>				
	Karen Brosnahan	Conference of Sports Bureau Manager	✓		
	Adam Skeritt	Tourism Marketing Sports	✓		
	<b>Clare Office</b>				
	Siobhan King	Tourism Officer	✓		
	Tom Coughlan	County Manager	✓		
	Gerard Dollard	Director of Service	✓		
	Monica Meehan	Senior Executive Officer	✓		
	Congella McGuire	Heritage Officer	✓		
Clare Tourism Forum	Catherine O'Hara	Community and Enterprise	✓		
	Siobhan Garvey	Marketing Director	✓		
Clare Tourist Council	Maureen Cleary	Marketing Exec.	✓		
	Flan Garvey	Chairperson			✓
Clare CDB	Michelle Moroney	Secretary			✓
	Pauline Roberts 0656824046	Treasurer			✓
Clare Community Forum	Gerard Dollard	Directorate and Secretariat			✓
	Representatives				✓
LEADER	Joss Lowry	Development Officer	✓		
	Mary Leahy	Chairperson			✓
	Richard Cahill	Vice Chair			✓
	Pat Shannon	Treasurer			✓
	Dan O'Brien	Secretary			✓
Burren Connect	Dóirín Graham	Chief Executive Officer	✓		
	Gerard Kennedy	Enterprise & Rural Development Manager	✓		
	Geraldine Spellman	Financial Controller	✓		
	Sue Targett	Social Inclusion & Community Development Manager	✓		
			✓		
Burren Beo	Carol Gleeson	Project Manager	✓		
	Edel Hayes	IT and Communications Officer	✓		
	Ronán Hennessy	Geopark Geologist	✓		
Burren Beo	Brigid Barry	Trust Coordinator	✓		
	Catherine Seale	Trust Administrator		✓	
	Martin Hawkes	Trust Director			✓
	Richard Morrison	Trust Director			✓
	Stephen Ward	Trust Director			✓
	Sean Braiden	Trust Director			✓
	Brendan Dunford	Trust Secretary			✓
	Ann O'Connor	Trust Website Editor			✓
	Tom Kelly	Trust Treasurer			✓
					✓

All of the tourism stakeholders interviewed agree the tourism destination needs to be managed. When they were questioned 'who is the tourism destination manager or managing the destination?', the responses illustrated a lack of awareness and confusion.

The majority were unable to identify a person however suggested multiple organisations:

‘There’s nobody really managing it. There’s, the only thing I suppose is the group here Burren Connect..., Respondent C05 (Recreational Educator).

‘There’s lots of different operators, you have state agencies, local independent agencies...,’ Respondent A01 (Landscape Charity).

‘Well there’s a slight bit of confusion because you have the national and regional bodies and we would regularly get emails from the national body which would be from the outdoor point of view, Ciara Scully, she would be in Fáilte Ireland. ...then you have Siobhan King in Shannon development. I don’t know how joined up all their thinking is. Destination manager is not a term I ever heard, so I don’t know if someone has that role. Shannon development would be the main people managing the destination from a tourism point’, Respondent A03 (Recreational).

The latter response was only one of two that recognised an individual from Table 6.3. Some acknowledged how a mixture of organisations is involved in the management. One stakeholder is uncertain if it would work to have a destination manager, even though theory indicates a destination manager is needed. Otherwise there is less chance of a coherent set of goals and objectives (Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). The tourism stakeholders were questioned ‘would it work to have an appointed tourism destination manager?’ The majority (68%) agreed it would, two supposed this position to be in place. Identifying an individual from Table 6.3:

‘I think the county needs to be looked at as a county. I mean Shannon development are a region and everything gets lost in that region so yes. We have that person, we have a tourism officer for the county implied by Shannon development. So that person exists... She’s the Shannon development tourism officer for Co. Clare.’, Respondent B08 (Local Authority Heritage and Conservation Officer).

Of all the people in tourism management positions, the tourism officer for Clare was the only person identified. The final question in relation to this topic asked ‘who should appoint a destination manager’. The respondents initially expressed uncertainty however there was a general consensus that the tourism stakeholders should be involved in making a decision:

‘The attractions that are already working in the area, be no harm in letting the public have a say. It’s impacting on everybody you know, tourism isn’t just a stand alone, it encompasses everything you know, directly or indirectly so everybody living in the area should have an input to it’, Respondent A02 (Attraction Manager).’

‘I don’t know that’s a hard one to answer, because you want somebody that kind of looks out for everybody. But at the same time you don’t want the local politics stuff getting involved so you probably want somebody that’s qualified. It’s probably best to have the leading organisation choose somebody,’ Respondent A08 (B&B Owner).’

Three of the respondents had stated the right qualification for the position should determine who is chosen for the position. The tourism stakeholders were questioned from which DMO a destination manager should be designated to lead and co-ordinate throughout the destination management. The responses expressed confusion and variance in opinion. Suggestions ranging from the NTDA, the region or appoint a local person. The destination manager position likewise to a DMO comprises more than marketing activities; they are to be a credible strategic leader in destination management. Only two of the stakeholders suggested the destination manager should come from Shannon Development:

‘Probably Shannon Development because they know the area well and it’s a good base, you know they are very familiar with the product to start with,’ Respondent B03 (Transport Operator).

These findings reflect how the tourism stakeholders of Clare have evidently not consolidated with the RTA Shannon Development. The stakeholders fail to suggest the destination manager should come from the RTA. Some stakeholders were indecisive and suggested a panel of different organisations would be required to fulfil the position. A combination of organisations working speeds up the diffusion of good practice within the destination (Haugland et al., 2011). However this is carried out through the co-operation with the DMO.

From thirty nine positions involved in developing and supporting tourism for County Clare, the tourism stakeholders were unable to acknowledge who is managing the destination. They are confused to the extent that they have no affiliation with any of the current tourism appointed positions. This creates problems for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. There is agreement that the destination should be managed and how it would work to have an appointed tourism destination manager. It would make sense if the positions were identifiable and to appoint a destination manager that would be recognised by all of the stakeholders. The need for a destination manager has not been realised, this ignores the key to cultural change toward sustainability. The destination has management positions for communications,



marketing and heritage yet no appointed destination manager even though tourism generates millions annually. There was a consensus that the tourism stakeholders should be involved in appointing a destination manager. It would be important to collaborate and consult with the key stakeholders on the decision of appointing a funded tourism destination manager.

#### **6.6.1 Funding a tourism destination manager**

In appointing the position of a tourism destination manager, funding is necessary. Challenges are often encountered when attempting to implement sustainable management. For example, high costs, lack of information, skills, knowledge, expertise and time (Salima Sulaiman, 1996; Wilkinson, 1997; Graci and Dodds, 2010). Pruijs (2008) stated that developing a reliable funding base may prove a challenge. This should not be a challenge within the chosen study area as the analysis identified that the abundance of tourism management positions for County Clare is funded by multiple organisations (Table 6.3). The majority are state funded and many are full-time positions.

The tourism stakeholders were questioned on their opinion with regards to ‘who should pay the destination manager’. There was a general consensus that the position should be funded by the government or contributions from the stakeholders:

‘Well probably needs regional funding. I don’t know if, to be quite honest I’m not sure where the funding could come from...probably a contribution from all interested parties, maybe some from industry, some from state bodies but for everybody to feel like they have vested interest in it’, Respondent B02 (College).

‘The stakeholders should contribute without a doubt...you won’t get involvement unless they have to put their hand in their pocket’, Respondent A03 (Recreational).

The most comprehensive response was provided by an attraction manager who exemplified a distinctly business orientated, economical approach:

‘The thing is basically there always has to be a commercial element in there so you need seed capital from public sector, to establish the necessary management structure but there should be a business model that incentivises the destination manager to be successful for the commercial stakeholders as well as the public sector’, Respondent A06 (Attraction).

One stakeholder, who has the role to promote tourism in the county stated:

‘Now due to the current economic climate, Shannon Developments funding is diminished greatly. Clare County Council have diminished greatly but they are still contributing the most to the forum and then the rest is fundraising. I have to do different events every year to get money to make sure I have enough money next year to cover my salary and to have something to do. ...I shouldn’t be spending my time fundraising...the people that end up contributing to the fundraising are the stakeholders. ...I should be getting support from either the regional or the government. There should be just something set up that allows you to do a job and not to spend 6 months fundraising’, Respondent B06 (Tourism Promotion Organisation).

On reflection of the latter, Pruijs (2008) point is apparent, that developing a reliable funding base is a challenge for this individual’s position. The response has undertones of research carried out in Australia where local governments were challenged to do more with less funding and that tourism officers were challenged to find innovative ways of achieving results (Carson, Beattie and Gove, 2003; Dredge, 2003). The stakeholders willingness to contribute in paying a destination manager was examined. Interestingly, the stakeholders had an elongated pause, taking time for reflection. The majority affirmed they would be willing to contribute:

‘We have barely any money to stay open ourselves, we would be willing to contribute towards it in terms of info and support but financial supports would not be viable considering we don’t have any ourselves’, Respondent A01 (Landscape Charity).

Even though financial support appears difficult, there is a willingness to contribute through other resources. It has been reiterated how a destination manager position is unrealistic if there is no funding. It is pertinent for governmental bodies and other tourism organisations to co-ordinate on initiatives such as the funding of a tourism destination manager. Otherwise without this position it will be difficult to implement the sustainable management of a tourism destination. There are hundreds of thousands spent annually on the tourism management positions in Clare. With over thirty paid positions that lack effectiveness among the key stakeholders of the destination, they can no longer afford not to have a destination manager. There should be no difficulties in assigning and appointing a funded tourism destination manager for the area considering the total salaries cost apparent (Table 6.3) for tourism management positions within County Clare. With funds assured, the challenge is to use them in the most strategic and effective fashion possible (Pruis, 2008). Furthermore it’s worth noting that for destinations where a funded destination manager position is a challenge, an industry

regulation tool of sustainability such as a licensing fee may be utilised. This could also serve the purpose of a destination regulation.

## **6.7 Vision of a tourism destination**

A tourism destination requires a vision to work toward. Generating a vision for a destination is important as it demands a future perspective (Vogel and Swanson, 1988; Korac - Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1998; Cooper, 2002; Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Presenza, 2006; Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). This is fundamental to strategic planning, as the vision defines the appropriate steps for action (Laws, 1995). It is considered the most critical component of tourism policy (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). Once the vision is in place it is possible to propose an action, to create strategies and goals.

The content analysis of the tourism strategies and plans for County Clare identified many tourism visions with large disparity. There seems to be no consistency amongst the visions from the DTTS to the regional, local tourism plans (Table 6.4). It must be pointed out that few organisations had addressed sustainability within their vision. The state appointed Shannon Development managing the region has not addressed sustainability. To have no clear vision of sustainability is recognised as a sustainability blunder (Doppelt, 2010). Doppelt noted most governments choose negative, backward looking visions focused on ‘minimising’ harm through compliance with minimum standards. These organisations managing tourism in County Clare neglect to align structures and systems with sustainability. Their goals remain the norm as their bonuses, job promotions and the hiring of new employees are not dependent on sustainability oriented performance.

**Table 6.4** Visions associated with County Clare

<b>Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport</b> To ensure that the transport, tourism and sport sectors make the greatest possible contribution to economic recovery, fiscal consolidation, job creation and social development.
<b>National Development Plan</b> This National Development Plan 2007-2013 sets out the economic and social investment priorities needed to realise the vision of a better quality of life for all. This better quality of life will be achieved by supporting the continued development of a dynamic and internationalised economy and society with a high commitment to international competitiveness, social justice and environmental sustainability (Government of Ireland, 2007).
<b>Fáilte Ireland NTDA</b> The Vision for Irish Tourism is that Ireland will be a destination of choice for international and domestic tourists which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieves growth in market share with a higher yield;</li> <li>• Has a pristine physical environment;</li> <li>• Offers an accommodation product which is diverse in its character;</li> <li>• Has key attractions which entice visitors to Ireland;</li> <li>• Delivers a range of authentic experiences, in a friendly, engaging environment;</li> <li>• Attracts investors and staff of the highest quality;</li> <li>• Demonstrates and delivers continuous product innovation;</li> <li>• Makes a sustained contribution to the development of the economy – especially from a geographically diverse viewpoint;</li> <li>• Respects and supports Irish culture in all its diversity; and</li> <li>• Provides a positive international profile of Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2007).</li> </ul>
<b>Shannon Development</b> Shannon Development's vision is that the people of the Shannon Region, and its investors and visitors, will live, learn, work and play in one of the most exciting and forward thinking places in the world (Shannon Development, 2011).
<b>Mid-West Regional Authority (MWRA)</b> To produce an evidence-based statistical report on key sectors in the Mid-West and highlight the challenges that the Region will face over the medium to long term (MWRA, 2011).
<b>Clare County Council</b> A county where people want to sustainably live, work and visit because of its unique quality of life. An inclusive county of sustainable communities that have respect for their environment, a sense of awareness of place, a sense of shared purpose and a sense of civic pride (Clare County Council, 2010).
<b>Clare County Development Board</b> To provide a framework that will support and facilitate the development of a cohesive and sustainable tourism sector in County Clare that will continue to make a significant contribution to the local economy (Clare County Development Board, 2011).
<b>Clare Local Development Company</b> Our vision for Co. Clare is an enterprising county of inclusive and vibrant communities (Clare Local Development Company, 2012).
<b>Clare Tourism Forum</b> No tourism vision found*
<b>Clare Tourist Council</b> No tourism vision found*
<b>LEADER</b> No tourism vision found*
<b>Burren Beo</b> No tourism vision found*
<b>Burren Connect</b> To establish the Burren as a premier internationally recognised eco-tourism region ensuring the future economic and social growth and sustainable development of its communities, environment and heritage (Burren Connect, 2008).
*Based on an analysis of the organisations published documents and website however in some cases a mission, aims, objectives and goals may be in place.

The research attempted to reveal if the tourism stakeholders of County Clare were aware of a vision for the destination. In response to the question proposed, 'does the destination have a vision', uncertainty was expressed. Half of the stakeholders were doubtful or presumed there was. A third acknowledged there was a vision yet were incapable of stating any of those from Table 6.4. The stakeholders are clearly unaware of the current visions even though they share the same county council and RTA. This is an indication that the visions may not be communicated or developed in conjunction

with the stakeholders. This causes implications for the stakeholders and for the management of tourism in Clare.

The visions that were stated by the tourism stakeholders did not correspond with those evident in Table 6.4. Some of those in management positions had difficulty in recognising the vision of the organisation they work for. It is difficult for stakeholders to know the vision when those in paid positions are incapable of stating these.

Development of the current visions has possibly been an inefficient use of time, resources and money. Some stakeholders supposed there may be numerous visions due to the fragmentation of the destination and the number of organisations managing the area:

‘I think it has several visions, not necessarily all joined together, I think there is several elements going on, I think it could possibly be a more joined up approach’, Respondent B03 (Transport Operator).

‘All of the different agencies have different functions so there’s not one for over all, so that’s what the charters trying to do to see if we can get one overall vision’, Respondent A07 (Governmental Body).

The one overall vision referred to in the response relates to a vision for The Burren. The analysis indicates the obvious need for collaboration, a fundamental ingredient in sustainable development efforts (Sautter and Leisen, 1999). With so many tourism stakeholders, it is challenging to find common ground among the various agendas (Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). Constructing a shared vision of the destinations future is pivotal (Getz, 1994; Ritchie, 1999). There is a general consensus in the stakeholder’s willingness to work toward a vision for the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

‘We would be willing to work toward that, it’s the only, that’s the way forward now. I suppose incorporating even from a cost point of view as well, there has to be a balance,’ Respondent B04 (Hotelier).

The stakeholder recognised this is also required for economic benefits and a willingness to work toward it. The findings have identified County Clare has many tourism visions that lack consistency rather than having one. There is a concerning absence of a vision to work toward the sustainable management of tourism. This could be detrimental to the future of the tourism industry in fulfilling the demands of the market.

It is recognised by the NTDA that the future success of Irish tourism depends on a shared vision (Fáilte Ireland, 2007). A shared vision is vital for direction setting (Schianetz et al., 2007). Visioning is most successful when the vision is developed with ideas from many people (Nutt and Backaff, 1997). There is a need for the stakeholders to create a “common issue of concern” which then leads to a common vision (ETE and UNESCO, 2007). To identify what people really want and how they wish their future to be. Tools that may be used to create a vision amongst the stakeholders may be through surveys, meetings and also votes (ETE and UNESCO, 2007). In devising a vision, it should have a timeframe to ensure progress toward its implementation.

### 6.7.1 Timeframe for the vision

It is necessary to appoint a timeframe for a vision in which specifics are to be completed. The vision defines the long term development of the destination (Ritchie, 1993). It is essential to have an agreement of the timeline that will be put in place to secure the vision (Cooper, 2002). This study sought to determine if the numerous visions for County Clare (Table 6.5) have a timeframe in which the vision is to be complete. The analysis identified four visions that had a specific timeframe, however their timing was not consistent.

**Table 6.5** Timeframe of visions for County Clare

Organisation	Strategy Timeframe	Vision Timeframe
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	Departments Mission	x
National Development Plan	National Development Plan 2007-13	2007-13
Fáilte Ireland NTDA	Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007 - 2013	2007-13
Shannon Development	x	x
Mid-West Regional Authority	Mid-West Regional Profile 2011	x
Clare County Council	Clare County Council Tourism Strategy 2010-2014	For the lifetime of the Elected Council
Clare County Development Board	Integrated Tourism Strategy for County Clare 2011-2014	2011-2014
Clare Local Development Company	x	x
Burren Connect	x	x

Having a vision with no appointed timeframe creates difficulty for stakeholders. The tourism stakeholders were questioned in relation to the timeframe and budget of a vision. They expressed a lack of awareness and no specific timeframe or budget was indicated. The majority responded that the vision was on going, ‘think’ it was ongoing or ‘think’ it should be on going.

‘It should be on going anyway because if you have a deadline for something and you need to go on afterwards as well, otherwise it could be forgotten again...,’  
Respondent C01 (Attraction Manager).

‘It’s on going because every year we have a work plan that we agree and then implement as ongoing. It’s been going for the last five years. You need a focus,’ Respondent B06 (Tourism Promotion Organisation).

Some of the stakeholders acknowledged the need to have a focus in the form of goals or targets:

‘I suppose something ongoing but targets are always good as well to keep everybody motivated. I would imagine something, aiming for something three to five years from now. Would keep everybody motivated but is enough time to get something done as well,’ Respondent B02 (College).

This respondent was the only stakeholder to suggest a specific timeframe. Three to five years is noted to be the typical timeframe according to the Australian Government (2004) steps to sustainable tourism. The latter response also acknowledged that additional specific targets are required. A shared vision has to be complemented with concrete strategies and measurable goals (Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington, 2007).

The current visions for County Clare lack in consistency plus a timeframe. Furthermore, the stakeholders are unaware of a timeframe for the visions. Having multiple visions with no consistency or timeframe could potentially result in failure of implementation, particularly when the stakeholders are unable to identify the vision. The findings reinforce the need for stakeholder collaboration to develop and define a time specific shared vision with a budget monitored by a destination manager. A vision set to work toward the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Setting targets and monitoring performance against the targets is important in assessing the scale of the achievement (Giró, 2002). Moscardo (2011) identified the vision as a common step in tourism planning models likewise to destination policy and planning.

## **6.8 Destination policy and planning**

Destination policy and planning seeks to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of a destination (Presenza, 2006). This is highly actionable and manageable by individuals and organisations (Dwyer and Forsyth, 2006). Never the less collective action is required amongst the stakeholders. It is possible for destination policy and planning to collapse if daily management and operational tasks are not performed effectively and efficiently (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). Moscardo (2011) identified policy and planning as one of the common steps in the tourism planning process. This aspect is addressed by the County Clare County Development Plan 2011 – 2017. The

plan outlines an objective to deliver a flagship international scale tourism project. The plan not only focuses on the tourist economy, an objective is to safeguard tourism by protecting environmental quality. This study examined if the tourism stakeholder's organisation manages destination policy and planning components, and/or if they perceive the destination to be managing these.

**Table 6.6** Destination policy and planning

*DK: Don't know	Organisation %			Destination %		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
<b>Are the following components managed?</b>						
Destination policy and planning	48	43	9	57	5	38
Destination Analysis	9	59	32	14	5	81
Policy Development	59	32	9	45	5	50
Transport planning	41	50	9	36	5	59
Land use and physical planning	41	45	14	45	5	50
Monitoring and Evaluation	45	41	14	27	14	59

The analysis identified no clear strengths in the findings, only (48%) manage destination policy and planning. Effective tourism policy, planning and development should be structured, formulated and implemented (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). Destination analysis was the weakest component managed, which raised concern considering this is required to understand the destination in terms of its management (Wray et al., 2010). Overall, there was a great deal of uncertainty regarding the destination's efforts. Lack of effective management of destination policy and planning ignores the potential it has to improve both the competitiveness and sustainability of a destination.

It is important to note that the NTDA has a Tourism Development Policy Unit (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2012), which can advise and support in this area. Furthermore, Clare County Council has a planning unit. This seems to support the assertion that the DMO could establish within the County Council as it would have access to the necessary departments such as transport, land use and physical planning. It would also interlink to the daily management and operational task of the local authority. If these are not performed effectively and efficiently, destination policy and planning may suffer. Furthermore destination policy and planning may be affected by the factors of the macro environment, these must be monitored.



## 6.9 Macro environment

As the tourism system is open and the macro environment is in a constant state of change, destination managers need to regularly monitor the environment (Ritchie and Crouch, 2010). The macro environment influences impacts upon the tourism businesses and host communities. Considering the macro environment is global in its scope, events in one part of the world can produce consequences for tourism destinations in an entirely different region (Crouch, 2006). The content analysis of the organisation's strategies and plans showed that the macro environment was not collectively addressed. The findings are reflective of Ritchie and Crouch (2007) opinion that many destination managers consider the global forces as irrelevant to their responsibilities (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). Nevertheless they are indispensable in the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

**Table 6.7** Macro environment

Macro-Environment *DK: Don't Know	Organisation (%)			Destination (%)		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
Political	71	24	5	53	14	33
Economic	90	5	5	76	-	24
Sociocultural	76	14	10	67	-	33
Technological	67	29	4	52	10	38
Natural	76	19	5	67	-	33
Climatic	67	29	4	62	5	33
Environmental	86	10	4	67	-	33
Geographical	81	14	5	67	-	33

The tourism stakeholders interviewed claim to take the macro environment into consideration in their management (Table 6.7). Of all the macro environment factors, it is the economic and environmental ones that are mainly taken into consideration with the technological being the weakest. Technology is imperative as it may be used to deliver value to stakeholders, communicate and improve business efficiency (Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). The stakeholders indicated a high compliance by the destination to consider the macro environment however the content analysis was unable to identify such efforts from strategies and plans. This reflects the absence of a destination manager as Ritchie and Crouch (2010) indicate it is the destination manager who needs to regularly monitor the environment. It is important for the sustainable management of a tourism destination to appoint a destination manager who will communicate change in the macro environment to the stakeholders so that this may feed through the management.

### 6.10 Organisation and management structure

Destination planning is made difficult by the variety of stakeholders that can affect a destinations future (Jamieson, 2006). Therefore it may be co-ordinated through the help of an organisation and management structure. The organisation and management structure of a destination is perceived as a network of interdependent and multiple stakeholders (Cooper, Scott, and Baggio, 2009; d'Angella and Go, 2009) on which the quality of the experience and hospitality offered by the destination depends (March and Wilkinson, 2009; Hawkins and Bohdanowicz, 2011; Waligo, Clarke, Hawkins, 2013). Establishing the right organisational and management structure is often key to success (Jamieson, 2006). Simplicity of structure is desirable (Lennon, Smith, Cockerell and Trew, 2006). The simpler the structure, the less likely it is to fail (Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). A content analysis of the strategies and plans attempted to identify the organisation and management structure of the tourism management organisations in County Clare.

**Table 6.8** Organisation and management structure

Organisation	Organisation and management structure
NTDA	✓
Shannon Development	-
Shannon Heritage	-
Shannon Trails Initiative	-
Mid West Regional Authority (MWRA)	-
Clare County Council	Out of date
Clare County Development Board	-
Clare Local Development Company	-
Clare Tourism Forum	-
Clare Tourist Council	-
LEADER	-
Burren Beo	-
Burren Connect	-

Of the thirteen organisations, only two had an outlined organisation and management structure. One was out of date (Table 6.8). This indicates that the tourism management organisations possibly lack information about their organisation and management structure or possibly have no specific structure in place. A clearly defined management structure can provide destination managers and stakeholders with a place to negotiate ongoing management, sustainable destination development, and effective destination marketing outcomes (Sustainable Tourism Online, 2010). The research assessed the tourism stakeholder's efforts and how they perceived the destination's collective efforts with regards to the organisational and management structure attributes.

**Table 6.9** Organisation and management structure attributes

*DK: Don't Know	Organisation			Destination		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
Design of organisational structures	73	18	9	45	18	37
Development of leadership and management capacities	59	27	14	32	27	41
Management of stakeholder participation	50	41	9	41	41	18

The analysis indicated the independent control the stakeholders take to manage their organisation. A positive 73% of the tourism stakeholders have designed organisational structures and 59% have developed leadership and management capacities. There is room for improvement with the management of stakeholder participation. Having an organisation and management structure should allow for the identification of who addresses each aspect of destination management.

The majority of tourism management organisations have not outlined their organisation and management structure within their strategies and plans. However, the stakeholders interviewed are advanced and have independently developed this within their organisation. For the progression of the sustainable management of a tourism destination, it would be beneficial if the DMO or in this case Shannon Development outlined a simple organisation and management structure. Furthermore, to communicate this organisation and management structure through strategies and plans, thus enabling it to be effective for the management of the destination operations and core resources.

### 6.11 Destination operations and core resources

The destinations operations and core resources are vital aspects to a tourism destination. The management of these are essential to protect and maintain the attractiveness of the destination. The core resources are the fundamental reason as to why visitors choose to visit a destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). This requires the management of a DMO and the co-operation of the stakeholders (Jamieson, 2006). This study examined County Clare's tourism management organisations strategies and plans to see if they indicate how they manage the destination operations and core resources. It was identified that many of the strategies and plans disjointedly address various environmental and cultural heritage aspects. A further analysis on the management of destination operations and core resources was conducted.

**Table 6.10** Destination operations and core resources

*DK: Don't Know	Organisation %			Destination %		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
<b>Are the following attributes of the destination managed by the destination/organisation?</b>						
The destinations operations, core resources	62	33	5	62	9	29
Waste	73	18	9	55	14	31
Water Quality	50	27	23	45	18	37
Air Quality	23	55	22	32	14	54
Wildlife	41	50	9	36	9	55
Forest/plant	36	50	14	36	9	55
Habitat	41	50	9	41	9	50
Visitor	73	18	9	50	5	45
Biodiversity	50	41	9	50	5	45
Crisis Management	45	45	10	36	45	19
Resident/community	45	41	14	41	9	50
Commemorative integrity	23	45	32	36	5	59
Culture and History	55	36	9	50	9	41

From the analysis of the attributes specific to destination operations and core resources, it is possible to identify how the management of these vary. The strongest attributes addressed are waste and visitor management. The management of these alone will not suffice for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Again there is little understanding of the destinations management activities even though much of the county is a designated Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This needs to be addressed.

Management of the destinations operations and core resources is not integrated to the tourism management organisations' strategies and plans. The stakeholders claim to self-manage these attributes however efforts were variable. This would suggest the protection of the resources that appeal to holidaymakers to make the decision to come to Ireland are being ignored. The core resources are a central aspect to attract holidaymakers to come to Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2008). Therefore the management of these attributes are vital. After all, destinations blessed with a 'natural edge' have become increasingly attractive (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). For the development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations it would provide much clarity if the attributes in table 6.10 are segmented according to the relevant sustainable management headings. For example if air, water and waste are addressed within an environment impact heading. This would provide transparency to the stakeholders on how these aspects are managed. The appropriate management of the destinations operations and core resources will contribute to the product marketing and development.

## 6.12 Product marketing and development

The product offer is the core of a destination. Therefore the appropriate management of the product development is required for effective marketing. Destination management requires a destination to develop products to meet market demands, cultural, natural or intangible in nature (Jamieson, 2006). Likewise, good practice in tourism planning is make sure that product development is carefully co-ordinated (Inskeep, 1993; Laws, 1995). DMOs take a leadership role in product development (Pearce et al., 1998; Spyriadis, Fletcher, Fyall and Carter, 2009). From a content analysis of the strategies and plans of organisations managing tourism in Clare, the research identified that four organisations have addressed this aspect.

**Table 6.11** Product marketing and development within strategies and plans

Organisation	Product marketing and development
NTDA	✓
Shannon Development	✓
Shannon Heritage	-
Shannon Trails Initiative	-
Mid West Regional Authority (MWRA)	-
Clare County Council	✓
Clare County Development Board	✓
Clare Local Development Company	-
Clare Tourism Forum	-
Clare Tourist Council	-
LEADER	-
Burren Beo	-
Burren Connect	-

Clare County Council and the County Clare tourism strategy have an emphasis on product marketing and development however the focus of these are separate. Clare County Council has a strategic focus on product development and marketing to respond appropriately to the challenges facing Clare County Council and tourism in the county. A weakness identified by Clare County Council is the lack of integration and co-operation between different tourism products and providers. Furthermore, the marketing of the county is not county wide. By fostering an integrated approach, it is an opportunity for the development of the tourism product.

Fáilte Ireland (2009) has identified the operational issues that are key challenges facing the tourism industry. These were innovation in marketing and tourism product development. The NTDA have a focus on product development and a specific product development strategy. The strategy recommends the state invests 280 million in product development over the period of the NDP 2007-13 (Failte Ireland, 2007). Furthermore, they have a Tourism Product Development Review Group (TPDRG). Shannon

Development has four full time positions (Table 6.3) as part of the product development team for the region. They attend the TPDRG consultation meetings. The remaining tourism management organisations in Clare were not identified to have attended the TPDRG (Failte Ireland, 2007). As tourism management organisations of County Clare, it should be significant to attend these meetings.

**Table 6.12** Product marketing and development

*DK: Don't Know	Organisation %			Destination %		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
<b>Are the following managed by the destination/organisation?</b>						
Product development	81	19		62	5	33
Training for product development	52	38	10	43	14	43
Location	73	18	9	59	5	36
Safety/Security	77	14	9	55	5	40
Cost/Value	82	9	9	50	5	45
Awareness/Image	86	9	5	55	5	40
Visitor Management	73	23	4	55	23	22
Marketing Research	73	23	4	50	23	27
A developed marketing strategy	73	14	13	59	14	27
A developed promotion strategy	73	18	9	59	18	23
Quality of service or experience	82	14	4	55	14	31

Product marketing and development is part of an interlinked process both at the macro and micro level. There has been a positive indication of efforts to manage the product marketing and development. There were particular strengths identified with regards to the management of the location, safety and security, cost and value as well as awareness and image. Training for product development has room for improvement as it is an underlying prerequisite for successful tourism product development. A strong attribute addressed by both the organisation (82%) and the destination (55%) is the quality of the service or experience. After all, the quality of service is an essential factor involved in a service provider's ability to attract more customers (Backman and Veldkamp, 1995; Yu, Morais and Chick, 2005). Further strengths were visitor management (73%), marketing research (73%), a developed marketing strategy (73%) and a developed promotion strategy (73%). There was some uncertainty about the destination management efforts.

The appropriate co-ordination and management of product marketing and development is required for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. In Ireland the importance of product development was recognised as the state invested a significant amount over the period of the NDP 2007-13 (Failte Ireland, 2007). The effective

management of product development is required by all the stakeholders of the tourism industry. After all, product development is a prerequisite for satisfying tourist's needs and changing demands as well as insuring the profitability of the industry (Raija, 2002). The UNWTO and ETC (2011) indicate that tourism product development should follow the key principles of sustainable tourism development. Without the appropriate sustainable management of the destination as a product, it will be difficult to market in the future. As the tourism strategies and plans addressed product marketing and development independently, this is important for the development of the research model. In managing the various attributes of product marketing and development, there is a wide range of destination regulations and tools that will contribute to the sustainable management of the tourism destination as a product.

### **6.13 Destination regulations**

The implementation of destination regulations is essential for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. Regulations are necessary to control the impacts of tourism (Page, 2003; ECOTRANS, 2006; Holden, 2008; Graci and Dodds, 2010). They can be used to strengthen sustainability (ECOTRANS, 2006). This study identified a multilayer of possible regulations and guidelines for Clare (Table 6.13). The regulations include those that are both mandatory and voluntary, ranging from planning legislations, individual business practice to environmental and sustainability regulations. Many of which are interlinked to the sustainable management of tourism. The regulations are initiated by a wide range of organisations and departments. Even though there are a vast range of regulations, the organisations managing tourism in Clare have not communicated these through their strategies and plans. They are also not communicated by Shannon Development, the RTA. Such organisations ability to both develop and implement strategies has previously been recognised as a problem (Haugland et al., 2011). As a result of the failure to communicate the destination regulations in the tourism management organisations strategies and plans, the management of the destination operations and core resources are also harmed.

**Table 6.13** Various destination regulations and guidelines for County Clare

	Organisation	Regulations and Guidelines
<b>International</b>	World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) UNESCO The Global Sustainable Tourism Council European Commission European Travel Commission Council of Europe Tourism Ireland	Agenda 21, Kyoto Protocol, Geoparks, EU Directives and Law, GSTC for destinations (2012). GSTC for hotels and tour operators (2012). The EU Eco-label (1992). EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) (1995). Using natural and cultural heritage for the development of sustainable tourism in non-traditional tourism destinations (2002). Using natural and cultural heritage for the development of sustainable tourism in traditional tourism destinations (2002). EU flower (Eco-label) for tourist accommodation (2002). European Destinations of Excellence EDEN (2006). Actions for More Sustainable European Tourism (2007). Network of European Region for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (2007). The European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism (2012). European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Management at Destination Level (2013). Manual on human rights and the environment (2012). Making Ireland Jump Out, USA Review, A strategy for growth 2013-2015, Tourism Ireland (2012).
	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTS) Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Dept. of Environment, Community and Local Government Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Dept. of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Department of Finance	National Development Plan (2007-13). Tourism Product Development Strategy (2007 – 2013). States Airport Act (2004). Public Transport Regulation Act (2009). Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland (1997). Irish Wildlife Act (2000). Heritage Act (1995). National Biodiversity Plan (2005). The National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020). Local Planning and Development Act (2000). Building Control Regulations (1997 - 2009). Building Regulations (1997 – 2011). Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS). Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Organic Farming Scheme (2007-2013). Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). Water Framework Directive (2000). Water Quality Management Planning in Ireland (1999). Delivering Change – Preventing and recycling waste (2002). Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005). The National Recovery Plan (2011 – 2014).
<b>National</b>	Fáilte Ireland (NTDA) Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) LEADER	Cultural Tourism: making it work for you: a new strategy for cultural tourism in Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2006). Feasibility study to identify scenic landscapes in Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2007). Review of good environmental policy and practice (Fáilte Ireland, 2008). Facing the challenges of climate change, Fáilte Irelands carbon strategy (2008). Interpretation planning guidelines (Fáilte Ireland, 2012d). Environmental guidelines for riding establishments (Fáilte Ireland, 2012c). New Directions for tourism in the west (ITIC) (2011).
<b>Regional</b>	Shannon Development Shannon Heritage, Shannon Trails Initiative Mid-West Regional Authority (MWRA) Regional Planning Authorities	Regional Tourism Plans. Regional Plans, Building Regulation, directives and agreements. Tourism Strategy for the Shannon Region. Mid-West Regional Profile (2011).
<b>Local</b>	Clare County Council County Development Board Clare Local Development Company Clare Tourism Forum, Clare Tourist Council Burren Beo, Burren Connect	Strategy for the Social, Economic and Cultural Development of Clare County Clare Heritage Plan (2011 – 2017). Clare County Council Tourism Strategy (2010-2014). Integrated Tourism Strategy for County Clare (2011-2014).

Source: Adapted and modified from Hanrahan (2009).

The tourism stakeholder's interviewed were questioned on how they are regulated by the destination. The stakeholders expressed confusion and a lack of awareness regarding the extent of regulations for the destination. A total of (32%) indicated there are no regulations for their organisation, including a respondent that works for the regional development company. Others indicated regulations are plentiful:



‘It is very regulated, for us there is adventure, activity safety authority but we regulate ourselves voluntarily. We just recently got a silver award from ecotourism Ireland for our activities for three activities...,’ Respondent C05 (Recreational Educator).

Taking into account the numerous regulations to be enforced, this stakeholder organisation goes beyond requirement and self-regulates. Sustainability regulations were acknowledged by 32% of the stakeholders and these appear to be executed in various forms. The SPA/SAC designated areas were the only regulations to be specifically identified from the table:

‘There is the special protected area which is legislation under the EU and Ireland legislation. I mean there’s lots, that’s the main statutory relationship to the Cliffs overall but there’s a host of different regulations when it comes to things like health and safety, general legislative requirements... There wasn’t something from the local authority giving us guidelines other than the SPA legislation, that was really all we had,’ Respondent A06 (Attraction).

The stakeholder acknowledges the range of regulations for the attraction however indicates the only one directed by the local authorities is the SPA. Further responses reiterated their self-regulation efforts:

‘We have the soil association that certifies our organic creams...,’ Respondent C04 (Attraction).

‘Of course yeah we’ve the Bord Fáilte, accreditations, there’s other laws and regulations you adhere to as such. We have the GHA from a sustainability point of view, yeah were aiming right now for platinum of the GHA. I’m not sure how that is being translated from a tourism point of view to our international one. We try to market it. There’s a lot of North American business now that won’t actually come and give you business or even approach you if you don’t have some sort of environmental policy in place. That’s good,’ Respondent B04 (Hospitality).

Interestingly, this hotel is progressing to self regulate with tourism certification. If more organisations were to self-regulate there would be less need to enforce regulations. The stakeholders did not identify quotas as a form of regulation. It was highlighted that for the sustainable management of tourism, quotas are important to set a limit on the number of visitors to a destination over a period of time (Logar, 2009). With much of the county designated as a SPA and SAC, this instrument may help reduce pressures on natural resources.

The tourism organisations managing the destination have not communicated the various specific tourism destination regulations and guidelines for County Clare. As a result, it

is difficult for the tourism stakeholders to be aware of the extent of regulations for the destination. This in turn warrants attention. A particular concern arose when the research identified that an individual working for the regional tourism authority was unaware of the abundance of regulations. This is an indication of a need for training in the organisation. This study agrees with (Haugland et al., 2011) that indicated that such organisation's ability to both develop and implement strategies is a problem. To rectify this, tourism management organisation plans need to be advanced and updated to include the range of destination regulations. A set of specific guidelines for the sustainable management of a tourism destination should be communicated by the DMO, to generate the required penetration and awareness among the stakeholders. In this case, it is apparent that there is a need for both an overarching DMO and destination manager who would communicate these regulations. The co-ordination of the regulations may be complemented through the implementation of destination management tools.

### 6.13.1 Destination management tools

There are a variety of tools that may be used for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The literature review chapters discussed tools of sustainability which are also of significant importance for destination management (Foh, 1999; Mowforth and Munts, 2009). Various tools possess different strengths and weaknesses depending on the characteristics of the destination. Therefore a combination of different tools is required to allow the best possible decision making. The research assessed the use of fifteen destination management tools as outlined in Table 6.14.

**Table 6.14** Destination management tools

*DK: Don't Know	Organisation %			Destination %		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
<b>Are any of these management tools used?</b>						
Environmental Management System	32	59	9	27	9	64
Local Agenda 21	23	68	9	5	18	77
Cleaner Production	9	82	9	5	18	77
Certification (accredited)	32	59	9	18	5	77
Education	59	32	9	23	9	68
Industry Regulation	59	32	9	36	14	50
Visitor Management Techniques	59	32	9	36	5	59
Environmental Impact Assessment	41	50	9	32	5	63
Carrying capacity calculations	36	45	19	14	18	68
Consultation and participation techniques	45	41	14	36	9	55
Codes of conduct	55	27	18	32	9	59
Sustainability Indicators	27	50	23	14	18	68
Fair trade in tourism	45	45	10	14	23	63
Area Protection	50	41	9	14	14	72
Footprinting and carbon budget analysis	18	68	14	14	14	72

The detailed table of results shows that there are no commonly used tools by the destination but codes of conduct, visitor management techniques, industry regulation and education are used by a small majority. There was a high percentage of uncertainty regarding the management tools implemented by the destination. However it is important to recall that the stakeholders do not understand who manages tourism in the destination. In addition, there is a lack of organisation and management structures to identify who does what. It was particularly concerning that many are located in a SAC, however only 27% use sustainability indicators.

It is important for the organisations managing tourism in County Clare to communicate the regulations and tools implemented for the sustainable management of tourism. It would also be important to encourage self-regulation through certification. The more destination stakeholders to self-regulate through certification would mean less of a need to enforce regulations and reduce spending. Furthermore, it would contribute to maintaining the destinations core resources to ensure the product may continue to be marketed and developed. All these findings inform the development and construction of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

#### **6.14 A model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations**

In context of the analysis on the sustainable management of a tourism destination, it is suggested that the tourism industry reassess their management approach. The findings on the demand for sustainable tourism destinations and unmet supply suggest the need for the demands of the market to be taken into consideration in the management approach to tourism. It is important to first make the decision to consider the transition to the sustainable management of tourism destinations among the destination stakeholders. It is then important to form a consensus on a clearly defined destination parameter that is agreed upon by the stakeholders rather than have a fragmented destination.

To lead and co-ordinate the sustainable management of a tourism destination, it would be most effective to appoint one specific DMO who interacts effectively with the stakeholders. To fulfil the demands and protect destination resources, the DMO should identify the demand and supply of sustainable tourism. It would be important to work

toward forming a close linkage between demand and supply if a decision is agreed upon for the transition towards the sustainable management of a tourism destination. This may be achieved through the co-ordinated approach of a model for this transition.

This assessment of the sustainable management of a tourism destination identified issues to be addressed in the context of tourism destination management and the sustainable management of tourism. It would be beneficial to appoint a funded tourism destination manager to oversee destination management. It would be important that they conduct an analysis of the destination strategies and plans in the context of the macro environment. This will contribute to the planning process as the factors of the macro environment can affect it. It is recommended that the destination manager develops a time specific shared vision for the destination. An assigned budget will be required to conduct management within the destination according to the vision.

Many of the planning and management activities in the destination would benefit if it was aligned with the most recent theory of the GSTC (2012) for destinations and the EC ETIS (2013). Furthermore, the management of the organisation and its management structure, destination policy and planning, product marketing and development may be managed more effectively if integrated in a tourism planning process that also incorporates destination regulations and tools. For clarity of the sustainable management approach, it may be effective if the tourism planning process is aligned with the headings for the sustainable management of tourism.

This research has provided data that strengthens the need for a model to guide transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The construction of the model is designed as a practical process that the NTDA and DMO can follow. Furthermore, it clearly indicates stakeholder involvement. The proposed design of the model and components are discussed in detail in the chapter to follow.

### **6.15 Conclusion**

The second aim of this research has been addressed through the application of the theoretical framework to assess the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The results have bridged the gap in knowledge (objective c) by identifying the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland as well as unmet supply.

For the examination of the sustainable management of tourism in a destination (County Clare) (objective d), the assessment identified a number of challenges. There was stakeholder confusion, a lack of understanding and fundamental differences in the scope of defining the tourism destination parameter of County Clare. There is a plethora of organisations managing tourism in Clare causing stakeholder confusion, and they do not clearly identify the RTA as managing the destination. There is thus no DMO to co-ordinate the sustainable management of tourism. This research identified that many budgets contribute to more than thirty tourism management positions within County Clare however these positions appear not to ensure management effectiveness among the destination stakeholders. There is one tourism officer, however there is no specific position of destination manager to influence the implementation of sustainable management.

A tourism destination requires a vision to work toward. The content analysis of the existing tourism strategies and plans identified many tourism visions that lack in consistency and a timeframe. Few address sustainability. Furthermore, stakeholders were unaware of those visions that do exist even though they share the same county council and RTA.

The existing tourism management organisations strategies and plans from a national to local level have not collectively addressed the destination policy and planning and the macro environment. The tourism stakeholders interviewed had no clear strengths in destination policy and planning and were uncertain of the destination's efforts in this area. There were strengths however in the management of the macro environment. Of the thirteen tourism management organisations of County Clare, only two had a communicated organisation and management structure and one of these was out of date.

It is important for the tourism stakeholders to take independent control in the management of their organisation and management structure.

Vital aspects in the management of a tourism destination are the destinations operations and core resources. These are disjointedly addressed in the tourism management organisations strategies and plans. The tourism stakeholders have strengths in waste and visitor management and there was again little understanding of the destinations management activities. Product marketing and development was the strongest aspect addressed, in particular the management of the location, safety and security, cost, value, awareness and image. It was also clearly addressed in four of the tourism management organisations strategies and plans. Nevertheless, a multilayer of possible regulations and guidelines for County Clare were identified which are not communicated through the strategies and plans. The stakeholders lack awareness of these. Of the tools of sustainability applicable for destination management (Foh, 2001; Mowforth and Munt, 2009), those most popular were education, industry regulation and visitor management techniques.

The gap of issues identified on the level of sustainable management of tourism in County Clare causes implications for the stakeholders. It also generates challenges towards the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The findings drawn from the assessment were combined to reassess the theoretical framework to contribute to objective e, the development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. Certainly the receptivity from the County Clare tourism stakeholders to sustainable tourism and the demands from the market seem to indicate that this model could have wide applicability. The research model is presented in the concluding chapter.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## 7.1 Introduction

This research has made a contribution to new knowledge in relation to sustainable tourism in Ireland. This chapter will explore in greater detail what the research has achieved. The thesis started with the understanding that there is a shift towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. This is being consolidated at an international level, most notably through the GSTC (2012) criteria for destinations. It is also reflected through the launch of the European Commission's European Tourism Indicator System (2013) for sustainable management at destination level. While there is a drive towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations, the stakeholders within the Irish tourism industry seem to be lacking an informed management approach.

This chapter presents summaries related to the research aims and objectives in order to construct a set of conclusions and recommendations from the findings. Many of these findings point to the need for a standard process or model to be followed to facilitate the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The research for this thesis has been utilised to construct a theoretical model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations (Figure 7.2). This model, which has been designed to conform to (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013) is presented and discussed. The chapter finally proposes support mechanisms for the sustainable management of tourism destinations and makes recommendations on avenues for future research.

## 7.2 The demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland

Until now, the Irish tourism industry has not examined the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism. Ireland's natural resources are a main contributing factor for attracting holidaymakers to visit Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2010a). Therefore tourism

destinations are reliant on effective sustainable management to ensue the protection of these desired aspects. The tourism industry cannot afford to ignore changes in the pattern of demand and the type of tourism they offer (TSG, 2007). This research set forth to provide nationwide baseline findings on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland which was the first aim of this research:

1. Assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland.

This aim was achieved through the research objective:

- a) Assess the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland.

This research concludes that the majority of the 1356 domestic and overseas holidaymakers and the sample of 369 national tourism businesses understand the concept of sustainable tourism. The holidaymakers (66%) and national tourism businesses (63%) demand that 'all tourism should be sustainable'. It is recommended that the NTDA communicate the demand for sustainable tourism to the tourism industry. It is further recommended that this issue is prioritised and addressed within national and local strategies. It is advocated that the provision of relevant mechanisms to support the industry in the transition to the sustainable management of tourism are put in place.

This research concluded that 79% of the sample of Irish tourism businesses will demand support to convert to sustainable tourism if this is required. They further demand resources in the form of detailed information, funding, training and mentoring to implement sustainable tourism. It is recommended that a core commitment of support is given by the NTDA, Regional Tourism Authorities (RTA), LEADER and the educational bodies. The provision of detailed information on the conversion to the sustainable management of tourism is recommended. There is a further recommendation that training and mentoring is established and provided by the NTDA to the Irish tourism businesses on the sustainable management of tourism.

In relation to the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism, a high level of importance was expressed for these to be incorporated in the management of the Irish tourism industry. This was expressed by both holidaymakers and tourism businesses. The twelve aims of sustainable tourism should be included as the scope of



effective sustainable management of tourism (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Flanagan et al., 2007). It is recommended that training is provided to the industry on how they may incorporate these throughout their management practices.

The research concludes that international sustainable tourism certification labels attain a greater level of recognition by the tourism businesses and holidaymakers than national and local labels. It was found that the proliferation of labels generate confusion and there is a preference for one label that is recognised globally. There is however concern for greenwashing, the tourism businesses agreed that it is important to have certification verified by an independent third party. It is recommended that the NTDA promotes a globally recognised GSTC compliant certification program to the tourism industry. Two of Irelands leading attractions, Guinness Storehouse and the Cliffs of Moher have implemented the Sustainable Travel International certification which conforms to the GSTC. It is recommended that the benefits to be gained from implementing certification are communicated in order to encourage the tourism industry to self-regulate. This would save the EPA, NTDA and County Councils the cost of enforcement and regulation of the sustainable management of tourism. It is suggested that the NTDA communicate the importance of certification to these bodies and outline the cost savings to be made through its implementation.

In relation to the conclusion on the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland, this was achieved by the objective:

- b) Assess the supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland with a focus on County Clare.

The research concludes that the tourism stakeholders interviewed in County Clare maintain the perception that their organisation's demonstrate effective sustainable management of tourism. It is also perceived that the destination demonstrates effective sustainable management of tourism. However, the research identified the tourism organisations and destination does not demonstrate effective sustainable management, as shortfalls were evident through indepth analysis. There was no model or plan for the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland or in Clare identified. These findings suggest the need for a model for the sustainable management of tourism destinations to be designed and implemented.

In relation to the implementation of sustainable management systems, a model will result in improved effectiveness of sustainable management within the tourism industry (Eagles et al., 2002; Darnall, Henriques and Sadorsky, 2008). The lack of effective sustainable management employed by the sample of national tourism businesses was characterised by a low implementation of sustainable tourism certification (8%). There was also a low implementation of sustainable management plans and procedures (28%). While the research identified more of an emphasis in respect of the implementation of an environmental policy statement (66%), the sustainable management of tourism is not limited to environmental policy. In conclusion, the potential for self-regulation is underutilised. It is recommended that training is provided to the industry in order to advance the potential for self-regulation through the implementation of sustainable management systems, plans, procedures and certification.

The sustainable management of tourism requires trained personnel working in the industry. The sample of national tourism businesses have a lack of personnel trained in sustainable tourism. This may have an effect on the implementation of sustainable management procedures by tourism personnel. As we near the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), this gap in tourism education requires attention. It is recommended that action is undertaken through the support of the NTDA and educational bodies to combat the deficiency of industry personnel trained in sustainable tourism.

A fundamental ingredient in sustainable management efforts is stakeholder, public participation and partnerships involvement (Sautter and Leisen, 1999). The tourism stakeholder organisations of County Clare have numerous strengths with regards to stakeholder involvement. Despite the strengths, aspects that require attention are the inclusion of community representatives in the key decision making process. Furthermore, they need to strengthen efforts in monitoring local community attitudes, issues and social conditions. It is recommended that the industry is informed of the benefits of stakeholder, public participation and partnerships to encourage their participation throughout tourism management. This could be made an incentive as a precondition to state support for tourism development.

The majority of stakeholders from County Clare (82%) consider their organisation to be maximising social and economic benefits to the local community. There were strengths in equitable employment and legal protection, possibly as these are specifically addressed by Irish law. Several of the social and economic related GSTC indicators were more suited to a developing country. However the stakeholders were uncertain of the destinations efforts to maximise social and economic benefits to the local community. It is recommended that the DMO maximise the communication of information and provide transparency of the destinations management efforts to the stakeholders. The information may also be utilised to encourage and communicate the benefits of maximising social and economic benefits to the local community.

There was evidence of industry adaptation from the implementation of cultural heritage management practices. The majority of stakeholders indicate their organisation and the destination maximise benefits to cultural heritage. The publications offered by Fáilte Ireland to the tourism industry on cultural heritage have a strong marketing and promotion focus. It is recommended that future publications incorporate information that reflect and educate the industry on how to maximise benefits to cultural heritage. It is also recommended that Ireland's cultural tourism strategy (Fáilte Ireland, 2006) is updated to reflect the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism, the GSTC criteria for destinations (2012) and the EC ETIS (2013).

The tourism industry's effort to protect the quality of the environment is not evident to all the holidaymakers. Ireland is renowned for its natural environment and beautiful scenery (Fáilte Ireland, 2010b). Just over half (56%) of the domestic and overseas holidaymakers consider the tourism industry to be protecting the quality of the environment. In conclusion, the protection of Ireland's 'clean green image' should be evident as a perceived lack of management may affect the visitor's opinion of Ireland's efforts to manage and protect resources. This aspect merits consistent monitoring. It is recommended that the NTDA integrate a related question to the annual visitor attitude survey to ensure this is monitored. In addition, appropriate action should be taken if problems are identified.

It would appear that the tourism industry has room to improve management practices to maximise benefits to the environment. Tourism can make a positive contribution to the

environment (Saalinen, 2006). The stakeholders indicate both the organisation (76%) and destination (72%) maximise benefits to the environment. Improvements could be made such as a purchasing policy to favour environmentally friendly products and strengthen management efforts to reduce pollution. In conclusion, the weakest area for the sample of national tourism businesses was the implementation of a water management plan (53%). This warrants further attention and monitoring, particularly as the impact of tourism on water has been noted as an understudied area (Gössling, 2005, 2006; Gössling et al., 2012; Hadjidakou, Chenoweth and Miller, 2013). It is recommended that the NTDA collaborate in the communication of the resources, training and funding available with state organisations involved in the protection of the environment such as An Bord Pleanála, ENFO and the EPA. Again, the implementation of sustainable tourism certification would contribute to maximise benefits to the environment.

In conclusion, this research has contributed new knowledge by identifying the demand for sustainable tourism in Ireland and that the country has a low supply. Many of the findings point to the need for a standard process or model to be followed to facilitate the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The research suggests that in future, the Irish tourism industry redress their management approach. The research recommends that a DMO periodically assesses the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in order to have an informed management approach. To facilitate this in Ireland, a basic toolkit which was not an objective of the study and needs further development, is provided in Appendix M with an explanation of how it may be implemented. This unrefined toolkit was developed in light of the findings and incorporates the principal themes identified from theory, conforming to the GSTC (Swarbrooke, 2000; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; UNWTO, 2007; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; GSTC, 2008, 2012). The initial findings on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism may be revisited in future using the toolkit in the context of a possible longitudinal study. It is recommended that the NTDA support the DMOs to refine and implement the basic toolkit to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in other destinations in Ireland.

### **7.3 Sustainable management of a tourism destination**

This thesis first identified if there was a demand for sustainable tourism destinations in

Ireland before carrying out an examination of the sustainable management of a tourism destination:

- c) Determine the holidaymaker and tourism business demand for sustainable tourism destinations in Ireland.

This thesis identified that holidaymakers prefer to visit sustainable tourism destinations (59%). They also make conscious decisions on their choice of holiday destination as 58% stated they choose to holiday in a sustainable tourism destination. The demand is not solely consumer driven as tourism businesses (59%) demand to be part of a sustainable tourism destination. It is recommended that this aspect merits on-going monitoring through the NTDA visitor attitude survey by adding a question on the holidaymaker demand for sustainable tourism destinations.

A supply of sustainable tourism destinations would contribute to the protection of the destinations resources for future generations. The majority of the 369 Irish tourism businesses surveyed indicated they are not part of a sustainable tourism destination. The supply of sustainable tourism destinations does not match the demands of the market. It is recommended that the NTDA who funded this research communicate these findings to the tourism stakeholders in Ireland and encourage them to fulfil the demands of the market. This should also combine the provision of training, mentoring, incentives and the use of a proactive planning model for the sustainable management of a tourism destination.

As part of this research, the sustainable management of a tourism destination was examined. A theoretical framework was constructed incorporating elements that emerged from the theory (Foh, 1999; Cooper, 2002; Howie, 2003; Page, 2003; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Australian Government, 2004; Jamieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2007; Holden, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Moscardo, 2011; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013). This helped achieve the second aim of the research:

- 2. Examine the sustainable management of a tourism destination (County Clare).

This aim was achieved through the objective:

- d) Examine the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare.

The field research concludes with the examination of the sustainable management of tourism in County Clare. Data was gathered through qualitative in-depth interviews

with tourism stakeholders in County Clare. This was complimented with findings from a detailed content analysis of the tourism management organisations operations, strategies and plans.

The literature has indicated that a key factor underpinning tourism destination management is the importance of defining the parameter of the destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). The study area is the geographical parameter, County Clare, located within the government regional tourism parameter of the Shannon Region. This region or parameter was not clearly comprehended by the tourism stakeholders. The research concludes that the stakeholders were confused and had a wide variation in interpretation of the destinations parameter. In Ireland, it is recommended that the sustainable management of tourism destinations are conducted according to the clearly defined existing boundaries of a county parameter. The county parameter is already defined, easily understood and is a suitable scale to be meaningful and practical for the management of a tourism destination (Koeman et al., 2002). Furthermore, the local authorities are legally responsible for planning, sewage, infrastructure, destination regulations and various related tourism issues within a county boundary.

No specific DMO to lead the management of tourism can cause stakeholder confusion. The research concludes that this was the case in Clare with thirteen organisations involved in the management of tourism in the County. There is no clear process or tourism planning process model being followed by the organisations. The stakeholders all agreed it would be an advantage to have one DMO lead and co-ordinate destination management. A DMO is required for managing tourism (TSG, 2007; UNWTO, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). It is recommended that the NTDA appoint one specific DMO to lead and co-ordinate the sustainable management of tourism destinations at a county level. Ideally, the DMO should link accordingly to the destination parameter and rest within the local authorities (County Councils). This would be favoured and economically effective due to the local authorities established involvement within the tourism sector which includes positions such as planning, a heritage officer and marketing executives among others.

This research has identified the need for a tourism destination manager at a county level. The leadership of a tourism destination manager is key to the cultural change

toward sustainability (Doppelt, 2010). The abundance of tourism management positions (39) in County Clare has led to stakeholder confusion about who is managing the destination. The numerous positions indicate a large salary cost annually by state and non-state agencies. These costs are for management positions in communications, marketing and heritage however, the research concludes there is no appointed destination manager for County Clare. This position is critical particularly in a time of recession when the destination needs to make the most of its economic resources. The need for a specific position appointed as a destination manager in each county with this specific title and a time specific contract is recommended. It is recommended that such a position and associated contract be incorporated into a model for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. For destinations where a funded position is a challenge, an industry regulation tool of sustainability such as a licensing fee may be utilised, this would fund the position while also serving the purpose of a destination regulation.

The NTDA recognise that the future success of Irish tourism depends on a shared vision (Fáilte Ireland, 2007). Eight different tourism visions were identified for County Clare with little consistency, timeframes or reference to sustainability. No clear vision of sustainability is recognised as a sustainability blunder (Doppelt, 2010). There was a lack of stakeholder awareness of the tourism visions, budgets and timeframe. In conclusion, the stakeholders are willing to work toward a vision for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. It is recommended that the destination manager develops a time specific shared vision of sustainability. It is recommended that a stakeholder consensus is reached on the shared vision for the destination. Furthermore, that the vision is integrated into a model for the sustainable management of tourism destinations and aligned throughout the destinations strategies and plans to ensure consistency.

The macro environment is in a constant state of change. The content analysis was unable to identify the macro environment being addressed collectively in the strategies and plans of the destination. This may reflect the absence of a destination manager as it is the destination manager who needs to regularly monitor the macro environment (Ritchie and Crouch, 2010). It is recommended that this task is also incorporated into a model for the sustainable management of tourism destinations. That the destination

manager monitors the macro environment as part of a destination analysis and communicates change to the stakeholders.

The research has identified the need for a set tourism planning process for the sustainable management of a tourism destination. Destination policy and planning should be managed appropriately in order to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of a destination (Presenza, 2006). No specific planning process or model was identifiable for the management of tourism in County Clare such as that in the Australian Governments (2004) ten steps to sustainable tourism. Destination analysis is however usually a particularly weak aspect even though it is a common step in tourism planning models (Moscardo, 2011). County Clare has one comprehensive County Development Plan (CDP) (2011 - 2017) which was developed by Clare County Council with twelve pages specific to tourism. It is recommended that Clare County Council manage destination policy and planning and reinforce the tourism section of the CDP by adopting the model presented in Figure 7.2. As the CDP is required by law to be reviewed and implemented every six years in consultation with the community, it is recommended that the model in Figure 7.2 be designed to work within this timeframe. This strengthens the need for destinations to be managed at county level in order to have one strategic approach, which is legally binding.

A coherent organisational and management structure is often key to success (Jamieson, 2006). However it is concluded that only two of the thirteen tourism management organisations in Clare had outlined an organisation and management structure in their strategies and plans. The absence of an outlined structure likely leads to a lack of effectiveness of the organisation as the stakeholders are unable to identify particular responsibilities. It is recommended that the tourism planning process integrates a consultation process to ensure these structures are up to date and clearly communicated. Furthermore, it is recommended that funding from state agencies to these bodies is conditional upon up to date organisation and management structure being in place. It is advocated that this would result in a reduction of duplicated efforts.

The strategies and plans for County Clare have not clearly outlined how the destinations operations and core resources are collectively managed and in particular, monitored. It is important that this is clearly addressed in the model for the transition towards the



sustainable management of tourism destinations. It is essential that the destinations operations and core resources are managed to protect and maintain the attractiveness of the area (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). Even though much of the county is a designated SPA and SAC, the stakeholders were uncertain of their destinations management efforts. The lack of coherency in roles harms the management of the destination operations and core resources. To ensure transparency of the management of the operations and core resources, it is recommended that these are addressed within the tourism planning process. It would be beneficial to align these with the GSTC (2012) under the categories environment, economic, social and cultural heritage. Furthermore, to prevent duplication of efforts, it would be beneficial if the tourism strategies and plans communicate the resources allocated to manage the destinations operations and core resources.

The management of product marketing and development was emphasised within four of the thirteen tourism management organisations strategies and plans. As the focus on the product marketing was detached from the product development, it is suggested that these are addressed separately in the tourism planning process. It is recommended that product development follows the key principles of sustainable tourism development (UNWTO and ETC, 2011). It is also recommended that one organisation co-ordinates the tourism product development and marketing rather than have a wide duplication of efforts.

Destination regulations, guidelines and tools will contribute to the sustainable management of the tourism destination. Regulation is necessary to control the impact of tourism (Page, 2003; ECOTRANS, 2006; Holden, 2008; Graci and Dodds, 2010). There is a multilayer of destination regulations, guidelines and tools for County Clare. These are wide and cover areas from 'Environmental guidelines for riding establishments' (Fáilte Ireland, 2012c) to 'Interpretation planning guidelines' (Fáilte Ireland, 2012d). However, these have not been communicated through the strategies and plans. The stakeholder's were unable to identify these. The analysis of the strategies and plans also found no guiding principles. In conclusion there is some concern as only 27% of the stakeholder's organisations use sustainability indicators even though they may be located in a SAC. This is problematic. It is recommended that the destination regulations, guidelines and tools are integrated into a tourism planning model and

process. It is also suggested that these are communicated via tourism strategies and plans to generate awareness and encourage self-regulation.

In conclusion, this thesis has identified a demand for sustainable tourism destinations with an insignificant supply. This marks a baseline for research into the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland. There needs to be support for destinations to alter their management practices. The conclusions mainly raised concern in respect of the need for transparent management, to identify a management structure and prevent duplication of efforts and resources. The findings have been collectively taken into consideration with theory conforming to (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013) to develop a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The construction of a theoretically sound model is an original and significant contribution of the thesis.

#### **7.4 A model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations**

The model presented (Figure 7.2) was developed with the intent to assist destinations in the transition towards the Sustainable Management of Tourism Destinations (SMTD). A model that has international significance given its strong theoretical basis on which it was built, conforming to (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013) as well as the empirical data it integrated from research conducted in Ireland. The model was developed to provide an integrated management approach. Realistic implementation was also taken into consideration so that it may be integrated within the legal binding process under Irish planning guidelines (2007), namely the County Development Plan (CDP). The model will assist in the management of tourism destinations in Ireland and could potentially be adapted for Pan-European use. This fulfilled the final research objective:

- e) The development of a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

Much of the models approach is evolutionary, that is, it was built upon models already present in addition to current theory, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of tourism (Acerenza, 1985; Inskeep, 1991; Pearce, Morrison and Rutledge, 1998; Jamieson, 1999; Swarbrooke, 2000; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Australian Government, 2004; UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Jamieson, 2006; UNWTO, 2006;

Tourism Queensland, 2008; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Ladeiras, Mota and Costa, 2010; Moscardo, 2011; Rieder, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013). For the functionality of the model, it has been split into two distinguishable stages. Each of these stages and components of this model are connected to the theory and the data generated from the analysis of the thesis findings. Stage one is a process where the transition to the SMTD is considered. Stage two is a cycle for the SMTD. To better appreciate the model, each stage needs to be discussed however it is first necessary to discuss the contextualisation of the model within Ireland at county level.

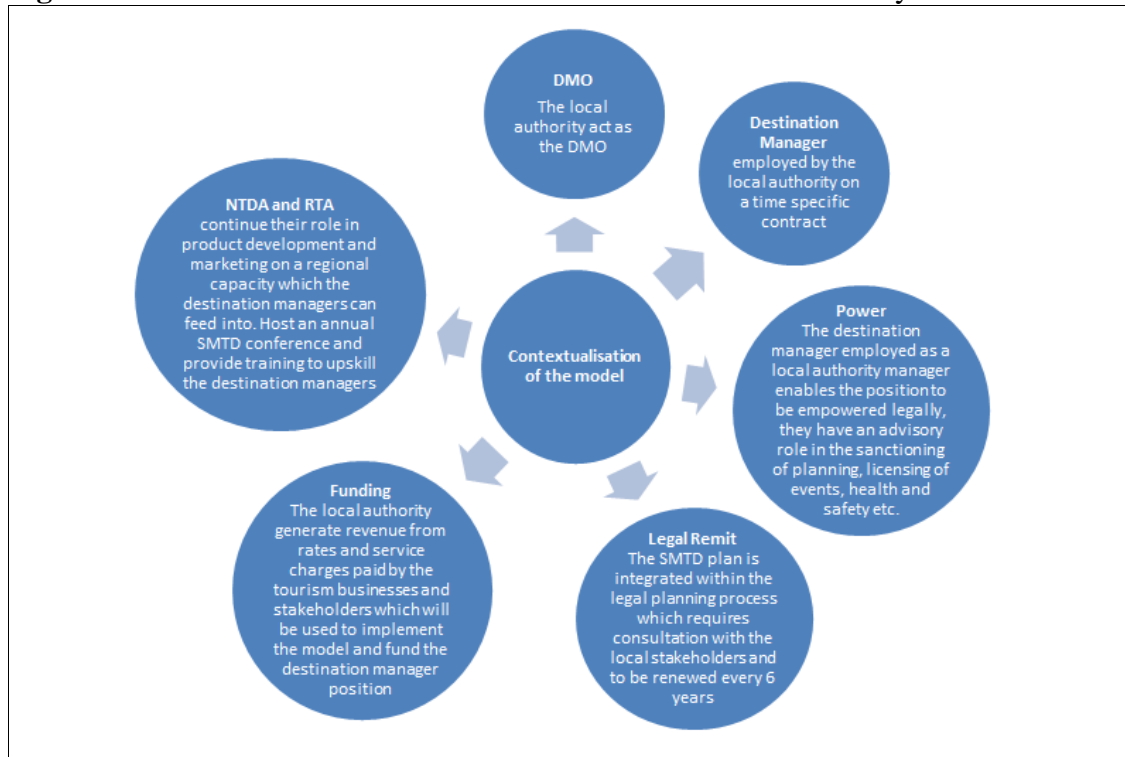
### **Critical contextualisation of the model for the transition towards the SMTD**

It is important to recognise that there are restricted resources in Ireland to fuel the SMTD. Taking this into consideration, this critical contextualisation (Figure 7.1) outlines where the model for the transition towards the SMTD fits within the destination, how the model will be implemented, identifies who does what, where the funding will come from and how tourism stakeholder participation is included within the process. This research has identified the logical place for the model to fit is according to the natural boundary of a county parameter and within the legally required county planning process. It is therefore rational that the local authority acts as the DMO to lead and co-ordinate the SMTD. Placing this function on a local authority could be criticised for overburdening an already laboured county council. However, it's the best fit to allow true integration of the tourism planning process as it aligns the SMTD with land use, social and economic planning process within the local authority.

It is the role of the DMO to appoint and empower a destination manager to lead the SMTD. A destination manager outside of the local authority structure could be criticised as being relatively powerless and reliant on the local authority planners and management for many of the SMTD decisions. The destination manager employed as a local authority manager will enable the position to be empowered legally. This will be obtained through their senior advisory role working with key decision makers over the local authority functions as they sanction the licensing of events, permits, planning permission, and health and safety. The roles and responsibilities of the destination manager are aligned to the local authority destination parameter rather than a regional or purely marketing alliance parameter. Thus focusing and aligning the SMTD process with the key infrastructural development and management services such as roads,

sewage, waste and water services, arts, biodiversity and heritage which are all primarily managed at local authority level in Ireland.

**Figure 7.1** Contextualisation of the model within Ireland at county level



In order to ensure the model is complied with in Ireland, it could be criticised for not having some form of a statutory obligation. As it is not possible to draw up new legislation for this model, it has been superimposed into a local authority legal required county planning process. Therefore, in the context of this research, the model is designed to provide an integrated management approach within the legal binding process under Irish planning law (2007), the County Development Plan (CDP). In compliance with the planning law, the destination manager must consult with the local stakeholders throughout the formulation and implementation of the SMTD plan. The SMTD plan is integrated within the legally binding CDP which is renewed every six years. A possible weakness here would be the six year term as a shorter term may be more adaptable to macro changes. However, this is traded off to secure the SMTD within the legal framework.

In this current economic climate, funding will be a very difficult task to implement the model and to fund the destination manager position with an attractive salary. However, a funding stream already exists from the rates and service charges that the tourism

businesses and stakeholders pay to the local authority. The use of this funding for the SMTD and a professional position salary will provide the tourism stakeholders with value for money while ensuring they buy into the process as they are literally paying for it.

It is important that the NTDA and RTA maintain their role and this is supported by the model. The NTDA and RTA continue their role in product marketing and development to ensure seamless management at a national and regional level. The NTDA and RTA will support the SMTD and collaborate in hosting an annual SMTD conference. The conference will allow the county destination managers nationwide to network, showcase destinations efforts in the effective sustainable management of tourism, encourage knowledge transfer and identify industry best practice. As the destination managers are under a performance based review, the NTDA will facilitate annual training and up skilling of the county destination managers. The NTDA will continue to monitor the management and associate plans to align the nationwide management efforts. The stages of the model are now discussed in further detail.

### **Stage One: Decision to consider the transition to the SMTD (Steps 1-6)**

Stage one of the model is a six step process. The steps will guide the decision whether or not to commence the transition to the SMTD. The steps of each section are labelled on the right hand side of each box in the model (Figure 7.2). These are discussed in chronological order.

#### *Step 1: Decision to consider the transition to the sustainable management of tourism destinations*

The decision to consider a transition to the SMTD begins by identifying the key stakeholders, establishing a destination development group and partnerships (Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; European Commission, 2013). An initial consultation among the industry and stakeholders is essential to consider the transition to the SMTD. It is outlined that stakeholder inclusion is important for the development of tourism in a sustainable manner (Ap, 1992; Gunn, 1994; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal, 2002; Andriotis, 2005; Byrd, Cardenas and Dregalla 2009). Ideally, it would be best if this process was initiated, funded and co-ordinated by the NTDA. This would demonstrate a national commitment to the SMTD for all regions

and ensure a funding stream to facilitate the process. It is important to note that some destinations will not want any form of tourism even if sustainable and that this stakeholder opinion must be respected.

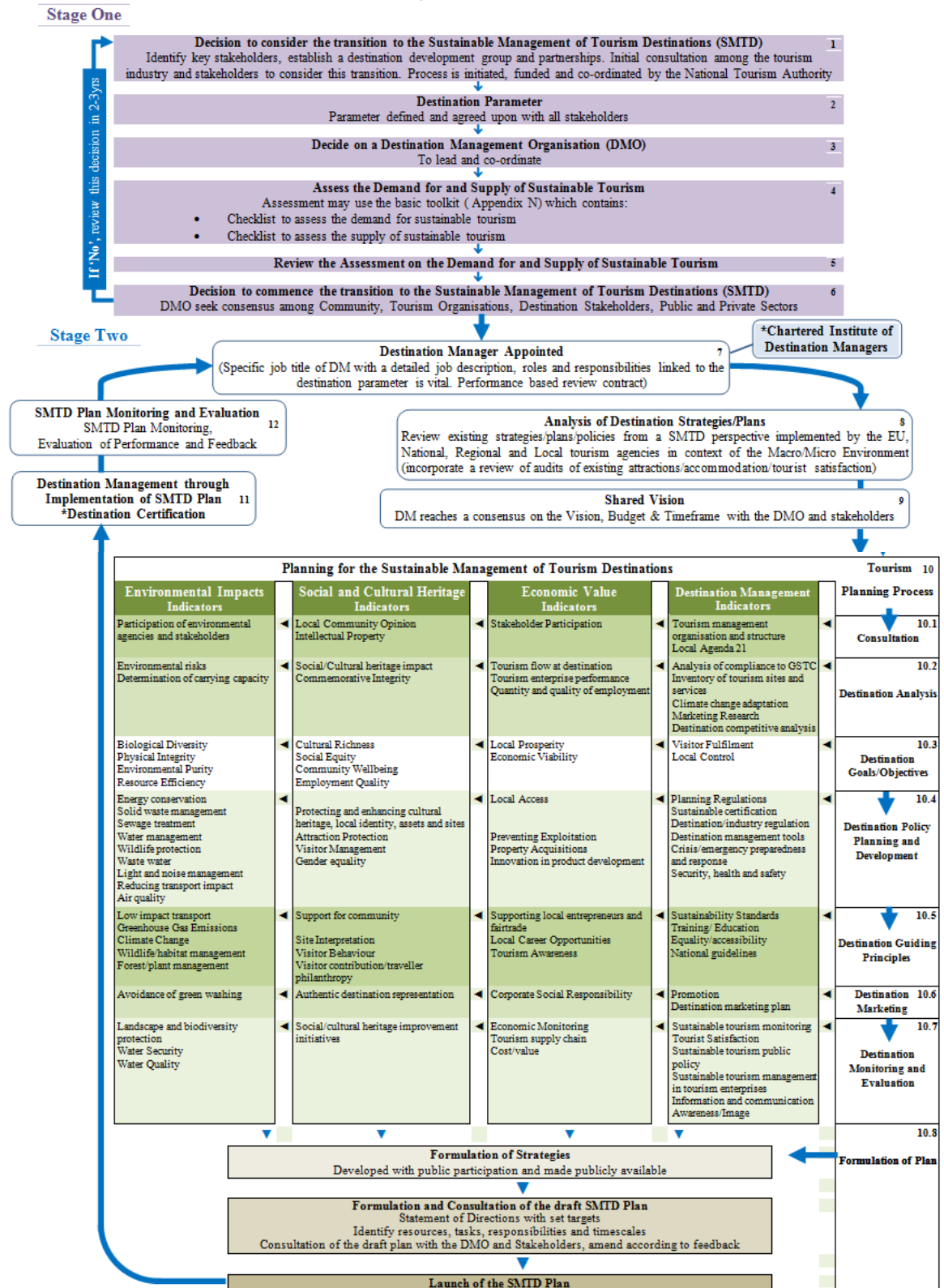
#### *Step 2: Destination parameter*

A clearly defined tourism destination parameter is vital for the SMTD. The need to define the parameter was highlighted in the study findings. A formal definition is critical as all the sustainable management practices that follow relate directly to the destination as it has been defined (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). For the sustainable management of a destination, a parameter too large is problematic (Lee, 2001) while a parameter too narrow is not practical (Schianetz, Kavanagh, Lockington, 2007). A division by county is what Timothy (2001) would classify as a 'third-order' border. A suitable scale so that the management is meaningful and practical. A county parameter would be beneficial as it is recognised as a natural boundary by stakeholders. The parameter needs to be defined and agreed upon with all stakeholders.

#### *Step 3: Decide on a Destination Management Organisation*

The presence of a DMO that involves different stakeholders is required for the planning and management of tourism (Heath, 2002; Page, 2003; UNWTO, 2007; TSG, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). A proliferation of tourism management organisations causes confusion which may be prevented by having one DMO to lead and co-ordinate the process of the SMTD. This thesis identified that the DMO is best located within the local authority county boundary as it has an established involvement with the tourism sector and positions that are interlinked to tourism management. It is necessary for the DMO to outline a simple organisation and management structure that is clearly communicated to the stakeholders.

**Figure 7.2** A model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013)



*Step 4: Assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism*

As with all forms of travel, sustainable tourism must be viewed by focusing on both the demand and supply (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Getz, 2008; UNEP, 2013). It is paramount to assess demand and supply perspectives in order to understand and facilitate the sustainable management of tourism. This may be conducted through the use of the basic toolkit (Appendix M) to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism. Sound management of tourism requires evidence of changes in impact over time so that adjustments to policies and actions can be made (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). The baseline assessment conducted by the DMO can be used for future longitudinal analysis.

*Step 5: Review the assessment on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism*

The data from the assessment on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism must be analysed and compiled into a report. A review of the assessment will enable the DMO to identify the demands of the market. Furthermore, it will assist the DMO in making an informed approach to the SMTD and respond to the demands of the market through the tourism planning process. Tourism planning should strive for a balance between the demand and supply (UNESCAP, 2003). However the decision of whether or not to commence the SMTD must be confirmed.

*Step 6: Decision to commence the transition to the sustainable management of tourism destinations*

The decision to commence the transition to the SMTD must be finalised in this step. Decision-making should be transparent and open to the participation of all local people interested (Herremans, 2006; ETE and UNESCO MaB, 2007). The DMO is to seek a consensus in the decision among the community, the tourism organisations, destination stakeholders and the public and private sector. There are two options, if they decide ‘no’, this may be reviewed in two to three years, otherwise, a decision to commence allows them to continue onwards to stage two.

**Stage two: Cycle for the SMTD (Steps 7-12)**

Stage two of the model is comprised of six clearly outlined steps (7-12) that play a crucial role for the SMTD. Under Irish planning guidelines (2007) the County Councils are entrusted by law to make a County Development Plan (CDP) every six years. For



the realistic implementation of this model, this cycle could be integrated within this legal binding process. As a result, stage two would be a six year process.

*Step 7: Destination manager appointed*

A key to the cultural change toward sustainability is leadership (Doppelt, 2010). Destination managers are employed in an increasing number of destinations (Howie, 2003; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008). This research identified that a destination would benefit from having one destination manager appointed. This will also allow for the more effective use of state spending. It is vital to appoint this position with the specific job title of destination manager and a detailed job description. Furthermore, the destination manager roles and responsibilities should be aligned to the destination parameter. A destination manager is typically from within the local authority (Enterprise DG Publication, 2003). A performance based review is required coupled with a time specific contract linked to the timeframe of the CDP. This would be central to ensure the effectiveness of the position.

It is appropriate to suggest at this stage that it may be advantageous that a Chartered Institute of Destination Managers (CIDM) be established. Theory has outlined that challenges are often encountered when attempting to move toward sustainable tourism development. These challenges include high costs, lack of information, skills, knowledge, expertise and time (Salina Sulaiman, 1996; Wilkinson, 1997; Graci and Dodds, 2010). In order to professionalise and regulate the position of destination managers, it would be ideal if there was a representative body for professionally qualified destination managers, akin to the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. Through this, the CIDM could maintain a register of destination managers from around the world with the necessary skills, knowledge and expertise.

*Step 8: Analysis of destination strategies/plans*

An analysis of existing destination plans, strategies and policies. This analysis needs to be completed from a SMTD perspective despite claims that more destinations are adopting sustainable, strategic perspectives towards tourism development (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000; Ruhanen, 2004). The analysis also needs to be carried out in the context of the macro and micro environment. It is suggested that a review is undertaken of existing audits of attractions, accommodation and tourist satisfaction. For example, in

Ireland, this would include a review of the National Tourism Development Authority strategies and plans including the visitor attitude survey. This research has identified a low cross compliance of strategies and plans. According to Wray et al. (2010) by undertaking this analysis the destination manager can gain an enhanced understanding of the destination.

#### *Step 9: Shared vision*

A vision for a destination is important as it demands a future perspective (Vogel and Swanson, 1988; Cooper, 2002; Presenza, 2006; Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington, 2007; Kruger and Meintjies, 2008; Wheelwright, 2011). The lack of a shared consistent vision was highlighted in this research. To ensure consistency of the vision, alignment throughout the tourism management organisations namely the UNWTO, EU, to NTDA, Regional Tourism Authority and the local authority of the destination will be required. The lack of stakeholder awareness of tourism visions, budget and timeframe indicated the need to reach a consensus on these aspects with the DMO and stakeholders. With such a diversity of tourism stakeholders, it is challenging to find common ground among the various agendas (Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010). It is suggested that surveys, meetings and votes may be used to create a “common issue of concern” and the conception of a common vision (ETE and UNESCO, 2007). Once a shared vision is agreed upon, it is important for the DMO and destination manager agree on a structured and realistic budget. This will provide an opportunity to review the potential cost savings from green technologies and effective sustainable management. It is recommended that the vision timeframe runs parallel with the County Development Plan which is required by law. The planning for the SMTD must be carefully co-ordinated before the implementation of the SMTD plan.

#### *Step 10: Planning for the sustainable management of tourism destinations (conforming to UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; GSTC, 2012; EC, 2013)*

Imperative to the SMTD is the integration of a planning process. The research identified the need to incorporate a clear planning process within the model. This research reviewed several tourism and destination planning processes ranging from 1985 to 2012 (Acerenza, 1985; Inskeep, 1988, 1991; Pearce, Morrison and Rutledge, 1998; Tourism Queensland, 2008; Ladeiras, Mota and Costa, 2010; Griffin, Flanagan and Fitzgerald, 2012; Rieder, 2012). The complexity and presentation of the processes varied greatly.

The model mapped upon the elements identified as substantial commonality within tourism planning models. These conformed to the common steps identified by Moscardo (2011) who reviewed 36 tourism planning models. For this model, it worked best to map upon the model presentation with the most commonly occurring order, the linear flow chart with summarised steps (Moscardo, 2011). This is outlined in the tourism planning process pillar on the right hand side in step 10 which is segmented into subsections (10.1-10.8). Getz (1986) reviewed more than 150 tourism planning models and Hall (2005) suggested that little has changed in practice since then with many tourism plans still embedded in economic approaches. The planning process proposed in this model differentiates as it feeds into four pillars focused upon the sustainable management of a tourism destination. The four pillars (destination management, economic value, social and cultural heritage and environmental impacts) conform to the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) twelve aims of sustainable tourism, GSTC criteria for destinations (2012) and the EC ETIS (2013) for sustainable management at destination level. The tourism planning process is aligned to the four pillars. The process integrates each pillar at each step of the planning process and onwards to the formulation of strategies. The tourism planning process commences with a consultation on destination management.

#### *Tourism Planning Process (TPP) 10.1: Consultation*

Consultation between the tourism industry, local communities, stakeholders and institutions is essential if they are to effectively work together (Edgell, 2006). The consultation step of the planning process will initiate through all four pillars in order to comply with Local Agenda 21. This enables people to participate in the management of their own future and destination. As the tourism destination is the primary unit of management action (Timur, 2003; Ritchie, 2009; Bornhorst, Ritchie and Sheehan, 2010; Fyall, 2011), this thesis findings recognised that stakeholders in the destination must be included in the planning process. Destination planning is made difficult by the variety of stakeholders (Jamieson, 2006) however it may be co-ordinated through the help of an organisation and management structure. This is the first aspect for consultation. Establishing the organisation and management structure is often key to success (Jamieson, 2006). Local community opinion is incorporated within the social and cultural heritage pillar which can contribute to the protection of intellectual property. Stakeholder participation is essential for the consultation of economic value. Theory

outlining the achievement of sustainability initiatives has been hampered at times by a lack of collaboration (Lovelock and Boyd, 2006; Wilson, 2010; Lovelock, 2011). Inter-organisational collaboration is becoming increasingly common in both the public and the private sector (Devine, Boyle and Boyd, 2011). As a result, the participation of environmental agencies and stakeholders has been integrated within the environmental impact pillar. The consultation step follows onward to the destination analysis.

#### *TPP 10.2: Destination analysis*

The research in County Clare specifically identified destination analysis as a weak component despite this being a common step in tourism planning models (Moscardo, 2011). A destination analysis should be undertaken to further understand the destination in terms of its management (Wray et al., 2010). The analysis will enable the DMO and destination manager to adequately anticipate and respond to the particular aspects identified. The analysis initiates with an examination of the destinations compliance to the GSTC as well as an inventory of tourism sites and services. An analysis of climate change adaptation would be beneficial to identify challenges and opportunities associated with climate change (GSTC, 2012). The market research will help inform the destinations competitive analysis essential to maintain a good position in the market. Positioned within the environmental impact pillar are environmental risks and determination of carrying capacity, tools of sustainability which are required to conduct the analysis (Mowforth and Munt, 2009). The destination's tourism flow, tourism enterprise performance and the quantity and quality of employment is an indicator of the destination's economic value. An analysis of the social cultural heritage impact will interlink to the analysis of commemorative integrity.

#### *TPP 10.3: Destination goals/objectives*

Destination goals and objectives are vital to guide the SMTD. The operational objectives of regional tourism organisations have often been geared towards marketing, with little focus on sustainable tourism (Dredge et al., 2011; Lovelock, 2011). The destination goals and objectives have been mapped upon the UNEP-UNWTO (2005) aims of sustainable tourism as the study identified a holidaymaker and tourism business demand for these to be incorporated in the management of tourism. These should be included for the scope of effective sustainable management of tourism (UNEP-

UNWTO, 2005; Flanagan et al., 2007). The aims are segmented and placed within the appropriate pillars.

#### *TPP 10.4: Destination policy, planning and development*

Destination policy, planning and development is required as it seeks to improve the sustainability of a destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Presenza, 2006). Effective tourism policy and planning should be structured, formulated and implemented (Ritchie and Crouch, 2007). Destination management requires a destination to develop products to meet market demands, cultural, natural or intangible in nature (Jamieson, 2006). Central to good practice in tourism planning is that product development must be carefully co-ordinated (Inskeep, 1993; Laws, 1995). The model has included sustainable tourism certification alongside planning, destination regulations and management tools for the effective management of the destination. The management of security, health and safety will compliment crisis and emergency preparedness and response. Policy and planning specific to the prevention of exploitation, local access and innovation in product development are significant for economic value. As cultural heritage is fragile and may be easily damaged if not taken care of (IFT, UNESCO, 2007), protecting and enhancing cultural heritage, local identity and assets is pivotal. Attraction protection, visitor management and gender equality is also essential for social and cultural heritage. The attributes collectively addressed will contribute towards maintaining the environment. Hudson and Miller (2005) suggested that in the tourism industry managers need to recognise environmental improvement as an economic and competitive opportunity. Policy and planning for light and noise management, energy conservation, sewage treatment, solid waste management as well as water management will not inhibit costs however these will provide an opportunity to reduce spending in the long term. The destination guiding principles will further contribute to the management of the destination.

#### *TPP 10.5: Destination guiding principles*

The analysis of County Clare's strategies and plans found a lack of communication of destination regulations, guidelines, tools and specific guiding principles. Destination guiding principles are beneficial in operationalising the SMTD. This stream of the planning process has been primarily mapped upon the global guiding principles of the GSTC (2012). Sustainability standards are the initial guiding principles to be developed

which are followed by accessibility, training and education. The economic value pillar includes local career opportunities, supporting local entrepreneurs and fairtrade. This is a fundamental aspect due to tourism's economic significance (UNWTO, 2000; Cooper et al., 2008; Tourism Research Australia, 2010; Moeller, Dolnicar and Leisch, 2011). Sourcing products and services locally is a means to enhance economic linkages and promote the benefits of tourism to the local economy (Telfer and Wall, 1996; Torres, 2003; Soler, 2008). Furthermore using low impact transport will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Tourism awareness aims to generate the consciousness essential to facilitate the stakeholders to participate in the sustainable management of tourism (Thiengkamol, 2009, 2011; Sangsan-anan, Thiengkamol and Thiengkamol, 2012) and make tourism more sustainable (Dolnicar, Crouch and Long, 2008). Guidelines specific to wildlife, forest and plant management will generate awareness of environmental protection. The social and cultural heritage guiding principles will provide site interpretation thus contributing to visitor behaviour and how they may support the community. Much of this information may be communicated through destination marketing.

#### *TPP 10.6: Destination marketing*

The thesis identified multiple positions and duplication in the marketing of the destination. Fundamental to the SMTD is to reduce duplication and ensure authentic destination marketing is considered in the marketing plan. The promotional messages are to be accurate with regards to the destination products, services and sustainability claims (GSTC, 2012). In respect to marketing the destinations social and cultural heritage, authentic destination representation is required. This takes into consideration community values goals and needs, rather than as in previous marketing which concentrated on the potential customers' needs and desires. The marketing of an organisations corporate social responsibility should allow recognition that may enhance economic value. This research also identified stakeholder concern of greenwashing, therefore the avoidance of greenwashing has been integrated. This aspect merits ongoing monitoring.

#### *TPP 10.7: Destination monitoring and evaluation*

Destination monitoring and evaluation is important for the SMTD in order for the planning process to identify changes. Furthermore, sustainable tourism is a continuous

process, and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing preventative and corrective measures whenever necessary (Edgell, 2006). This study has identified that the strategies and plans had not clearly outlined how the destinations operations and core resources are collectively managed and monitored. As part of the destination management, sustainable tourism monitoring, public policy and the management of tourism enterprises are to be monitored. Further data may be obtained by monitoring tourist satisfaction, the destinations information and image. To ensure the viability of the destination for tourism, both economic monitoring and monitoring of the tourism supply chain and value are necessary. It is vital to monitor and evaluate social and cultural heritage improvement initiatives to ensure there is no damage inflicted upon the destinations. It is also important to ensure the tourism industry is protecting the quality of the environment. This requires monitoring of the landscape, biodiversity protection, water security and quality. The involvement of the environmental agencies from the consultation stage is vital. This demonstrates how the planning process and sustainable management pillars are integrated throughout from consultation onwards to monitoring. The pillars have been arranged in a way to provide greater understanding, transparency and a functional process feeding onwards to the formulation of the plan.

#### *TPP 10.8: Formulation of plan*

The SMTD plan is initiated by the formulation of strategies which will make up the plan. It is important to establish a multi-year strategy for the destination suited to its scale. A problem with most tourism strategies is that they are still being written from a destination marketing perspective (Local Government New Zealand, 2004; Lovelock, 2011). It is important that the chosen strategy is detailed with a strong sustainability element reflecting the sustainable management pillars. This should be developed with public participation even though public participation has been reiterated as a difficulty in piloting sustainability initiatives (Griffin, Morrissey and Flanagan, 2010; Fitzgerald, Flanagan and Griffin, 2011; EC, 2013). It is imperative for the strategies to be made publicly available and these will feed into the formulation of the draft SMTD plan.

To combat any possible implementation gap between the sustainability rhetoric within the strategies and reality at the destination level, the plan will include a statement of directions with set targets. For the destination plan it is important to identify resources, tasks, responsibilities and timescales (Fáilte Ireland, 2012a). The research identified

stakeholder participation is to be incorporated throughout each stage of the planning process as this is necessary for the success of sustainable tourism (Thiengkamol, 2008; Sukserm, Thiengkamol and Thiengkamol, 2012; Sangsan-anan, Thiengkamol and Thiengkamol, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative for consultation to be carried out with the DMO and stakeholders on the plan and for this to be amended according to feedback prior to the launch of the SMTD plan. The launch of the plan conforms to the legally bound process of the CDP in compliance with Irelands National Planning and Development Act (2010). The launch is an integral mechanism for outreach to the tourism management organisations and destination stakeholders, necessary to generate awareness of the SMTD plan.

*Step 11: Destination management through implementation of SMTD plan*

The management of the destination is to be conducted through the implementation of the SMTD plan. The destinations management is a prerequisite for satisfying the tourist's needs and changing demands as well as ensuring the sustainability of the industry. This section of the cycle has the timeframe of the accepted norm, three to five years (Australian Government, 2004). Similarly to good practice in tourism planning, the destinations management must be carefully co-ordinated, this needs to be monitored. With the probability that destinations will be certified in the future, it is at this step that the destination should seek to become certified on their SMTD efforts.

*Step 12: SMTD plan monitoring and evaluation*

The SMTD plan monitoring and evaluation of performance is pivotal to ensure the achievement of the vision is pursued. It is recommended that a virtual tourism observatory (online) (EC, 2010; Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, 2011) is established to enable stakeholders to view the process. This will also be beneficial to disseminate information and feedback to the destination stakeholders. This information will contribute to a transparent system which will be beneficial for the performance based review of the destination manager position which subsequently leads to the renewal of the cycle for the SMTD.

The model provides a coherent picture of how the SMTD may be conducted. However, as tourism destinations evolve in their development, so too will the nature of their tourism management. In order to facilitate the implementation of the sustainable



management of a tourism destination, it is recommended that support mechanisms are put in place.

### **7.5 Support mechanisms for the sustainable management of tourism destinations**

This research has developed a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations that conforms to the criteria and indicators endorsed by the industry internationally and at a European level. The implementation of the model could bring a completely different position for the tourism industry of Ireland. This will, however, need significant support. The following recommendations are designed to support the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

It would be beneficial if a user friendly web tool was funded and developed by the NTDA such as a virtual tourism observatory (EC, 2010; Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism, 2011) or a data warehouse. This could be linked with the implementation of the model as a virtual presence to input, monitor and manage the information from the implementation of the basic toolkit and model. This would provide the destination manager with an outlet to communicate developments to the stakeholders. This could be fine-tuned to the destinations needs and be a system to engage and empower the destination stakeholders. This in particular may be beneficial to combat the recognised difficulty in obtaining public participation. If each destination were to have an identical system, it could also serve the function to benchmark management practices and enhance transparency of where the destination is at with the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland.

The thesis recognises the need for funding allocated by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport to create specific budgets for the NTDA to support the sustainable management of tourism destinations at county level. It would also be beneficial if the NTDA support an annual conference specific to the sustainable management of tourism destinations. The conference may be used to showcase destinations efforts in the effective sustainable management of tourism, create opportunities for knowledge transfer and identify industry best practice.

The tourism destinations should be divided into and managed at county level with supports specific to the county not regional. The sustainable management of tourism

destinations in Ireland will be more effective if carried out through the recommendation of or with the direct help of the local authorities. The NTDA and RTA would be advised to concentrate on the promotion of the destination and the provision of support to the industry.

For training and education, it is recommended that agreements are facilitated between the higher education institutes in order to integrate the sustainable management of tourism with current tourism courses. Thus generating graduates with the necessary skills and expertise who as a corollary may integrate the sustainable management of tourism throughout the industry. The capacity of Irish tourism students may be used to represent sustainable tourism so as to focus on the promotion of sustainable management in academic environments and the industry. It is also recommended that systems are put in place to mentor the tourism stakeholders to progress with the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations.

Finally, given there is a demand for sustainable tourism certification, it is recommended that the NTDA facilitate support to encourage the tourism industry to implement certification which conforms to the GSTC. These recommendations will require budgetary supports.

## **7.6 Further research**

The sustainable management of a tourism destination has received little academic attention in Ireland. The concentration of this thesis on the sustainable management of tourism destinations conforming to the GSTC (2012) criteria for destinations and the EC ETIS (2013) for sustainable management at destination level is amongst the earliest or is the only study specific to this field. It has highlighted new ideas of further research opportunities to be considered by future researchers interested in the sustainable management of tourism, especially in Ireland where further research is required:

- It is recommended that the model is piloted in a tourism destination at county level in order to examine the applicability of the model and establish the approximate cost of implementation. Furthermore, to determine how comprehensive the model is in covering the key issues affecting the sustainable management of the tourism destination and then to assess what value it is to the destination. Only through such a process can the rationale for the adoption of the model be reinforced. Following the

models implementation, it would be beneficial to have the destination recognised by the GSTC for their efforts in conforming to the GSTC criteria. This will, however, need significant support from the NTDA, regional tourism authority and local authorities;

- The basic toolkit (Appendix M) to assess the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism should be refined, developed and explored further. It should be fundamental for research on the sustainable management of tourism that toolkits developed should be grounded in the implications for industry. Thus it needs to be understood for this topic how industry is likely to respond to such a toolkit presented before it. The toolkit needs to be tested further through its application. Ideally it should be used by a DMO to gain an understanding of its practicality. To recognise if the DMO are motivated by the findings identified (i.e. demand for sustainable tourism, prefer to be part of a destination etc.). This would facilitate understanding of the potential efficacy of this approach;
- Analyse and seek to modify the modules of higher education authorities' tourism courses to integrate the sustainable management of tourism destinations. This may be conducted by reflecting upon the GSTC (2012) criteria for destinations and the EC ETIS (2013) for sustainable management at destination level;
- The outcomes of this research will have been influenced by the characteristics of Ireland: a mix of physical features from a developed country known for its landscape and clean green environment. The characteristics of other destinations with a different category of tourists or at a different stage of the destination lifecycle might result in different outcomes. Therefore, it would be useful to extend this research to other destinations or undertake a comparative study internationally. A multi-international study could provide more insights into the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism and broaden knowledge regarding the sustainable management of tourism destinations in different settings. Research in other destinations would help to identify issues relevant to the sustainable management of a tourism destination that might be similar or different to the case of Ireland; and
- Future research could look at basing their work on this study as the frameworks developed allows for a longitudinal analysis. Their future use should provide a clear indication of any changes in the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This research contributes new knowledge on the demand for and supply of sustainable tourism in Ireland. It has also contributed knowledge on the sustainable management of a tourism destination in the process of achieving the specific research objectives. The thesis has developed a model for the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism destinations that conforms to (UNEP-UNWTO, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013), thus meeting the principal research objective. This thesis narrows a gap in the transfer of knowledge which will be communicated to the NTDA who funded this research.

The implementation of the research model at county level, integrated within the legal binding CDP can contribute to a positive transformation in the sustainable management of the tourism industry in which our country relies heavily upon. The study's contribution marks a line in the sand for the sustainable management of tourism in Ireland. Due to the model conforming to (UNWTO-UNEP, 2005; GSTC, 2008, 2012; Fáilte Ireland, 2012a; EC, 2013), it has the potential to guide destinations in Ireland in the transition towards the sustainable management of tourism. With further research and development it may also be adapted for Pan-European use.